

SALLY:

AN HISTORICAL PLAY IN TWO-ACTS

Melissa Snyder

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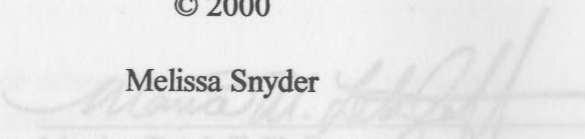
Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Master of Liberal Studies
in the Department of Liberal Studies.
Indiana University

December 1999

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Liberal Studies.


Tom Vander Ven, Ph.D.

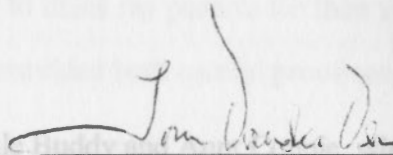
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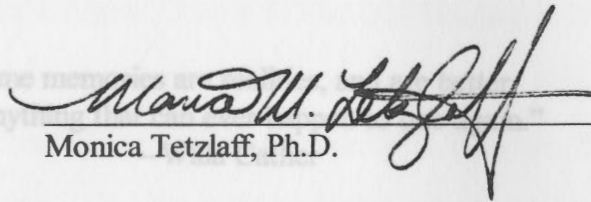

Randall Colborn, M.F.A.

Passed oral
examination on
2 Dec by 1999
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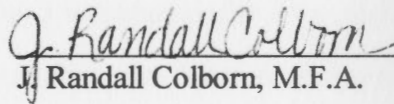
Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Liberal Studies.



Tom Vander Ven, Ph.D.



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*Passed oral
examination on
2 Dec by 1999*

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Acknowledgments

I am most grateful to Tom Vander Ven, whose insight, imagination, and humor made each step of the research and writing process as productive and painless as possible.

I would also like to thank Monica Tetzlaff and Randy Colborn for recommending numerous invaluable texts, and for their careful and insightful readings of the project.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their unfailing support (a special thanks to my mother, who provided both careful proof-reading and perceptive comments).

To Uncle Buddy and Aunt Connie, who gave me--
among many other gifts--their support.

"Some memories are realities, and are better
than anything that can ever happen to one again."

--Willa Cather

Preface

Acknowledgments

The human life, recorded faithfully, is seldom the stuff of drama. There are far too many cameo roles, unfinished scenes and unrealized moments in life (the human tendency often being the suppression of emotion and avoidance of conflict). I am most grateful to Tom Vander Ven, whose insight, imagination, and humor made each step of the research and writing process as productive and painless as possible.

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As both the life of Sally Hemings and the private life of Thomas Jefferson remain largely a mystery, *Sally* is, by necessity, a work of historical imagination—built upon the foundation of the people, places and events of Jefferson's public and political life.

One example of the use of historical imagination is the fictitious character of Robert. It is unknown whether Sally Hemings was engaged to or involved with any male prior to, during or following her involvement with Thomas Jefferson. However, one of my objectives was to illustrate the sacrifice Sally inevitably made in order to commit herself to Thomas Jefferson for thirty-eight years. She sacrificed not only the prospect of a "typical" marriage partner and family, but also, she distanced herself from the African American community at Monticello. I sought to embody this sacrifice in a character—thus, creating the character of Robert.

All other characters are historically based, as are most events referred to in the play (for example, James Hemings committed suicide in 1801, James Callender printed allegations against Thomas Jefferson in 1802, and Maria Jefferson Eppes died following childbirth in 1804). However, the characters' attitudes regarding these events are of my own invention. I trust that my research of the subject matter has enabled me to portray these reactions in a probable and respectful manner.

Preface

The human life, recorded faithfully, is seldom the stuff of drama. There are far too many cameo roles, unfinished scenes and unrealized moments in life (the human tendency often being the suppression of emotion and avoidance of conflict).

Writing historical fiction, therefore, is a balancing of historical fact and storytelling--frequently necessitating the omission, alteration or supplementation of history. It is also a willful act of the imagination in which the writer seeks to create the very scenes which were most private--those moments unobserved and unrecorded by history.

As both the life of Sally Hemings and the private life of Thomas Jefferson remain largely a mystery, *Sally* is, by necessity, a work of historical imagination--built upon the foundation of the people, places and events of Jefferson's public and political life.

One example of the use of historical imagination is the fictitious character of Robert. It is unknown whether Sally Hemings was engaged to or involved with any male prior to, during or following her involvement with Thomas Jefferson. However, one of my objectives was to illustrate the sacrifice Sally inevitably made in order to commit herself to Thomas Jefferson for thirty-eight years. She sacrificed not only the prospect of a "typical" marriage partner and family, but also, she distanced herself from the African American community at Monticello. I sought to embody this sacrifice in a character--thus, creating the character of Robert.

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List of Characters

(In order of appearance)

THOMAS JEFFERSON RANDOLPH: Thomas Jefferson's grandson. A young man in his thirties.

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ROBERT: A slave, age twenty-three to twenty-five.

MADISON HEMINGS: Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings' son, approximately eighteen years of age.

Act One
Scene One

List of Characters

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1827 (In order of appearance) Jefferson's death. The space is cluttered with crates and items labeled for auction. A bull's head, still mounted on the wall, is the room's only remaining ornament. MARTHA JEFFERSON RANDOLPH, a tall stalwart woman in her fifties, and THOMAS JEFFERSON RANDOLPH, an

THOMAS JEFFERSON RANDOLPH: Thomas Jefferson's grandson. A young man in his thirties.

Martha: No, Thomas. I've already sorted those books.

MARTHA JEFFERSON RANDOLPH: Thomas Jefferson's daughter. A tall woman with graying hair, approximately fifty-seven years of age. *I've done anymore.*

SALLY HEMINGS: A light skinned octoroon, approximately fifty-six years of age.

SALLY HEMINGS: A young girl, aged fourteen to seventeen.

MARTHA JEFFERSON: A tall red-haired girl, aged fifteen to eighteen.

THOMAS JEFFERSON: From age forty-five to age eighty-three.

JAMES HEMINGS: Sally's brother. A light-skinned young man, twenty-three to twenty-six years old.

Thomas: No more than usual.

ROBERT: A slave, age twenty-three to twenty-five.

Martha: (Rubs her eyes) Hush. Now, what else is there? I know we brought down his

MADISON HEMINGS: Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings' son, approximately eighteen years of age.

Thomas: It's right behind you.

Martha: Oh! How foolish. . . . That's senility for you. Where is the--

Thomas: You look half dead, Mother. Why don't you go to bed?

Martha: And the compliments pour forth like so much wine.

Act One
Scene One

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829. It is three years after Jefferson's death. The space is cluttered with crates and items labeled for auction. A bull's head, still mounted on the wall, is the room's only remaining ornament. MARTHA JEFFERSON RANDOLPH, a tall stalwart woman in her fifties, and THOMAS JEFFERSON RANDOLPH, an exuberant man in his thirties, ready items for auction.

Martha: No, Thomas. I've already sorted those books.

Thomas: Sorry. I can't seem to remember what we've done anymore.

Martha: Have you checked his room again?

Thomas: Three times.

Martha: I feel certain that we've forgotten something.

Thomas: I don't care anymore if we have.

Martha: *(Pinches his face)* And the irritability surfaces. Have I worn my boy out?

Thomas: No more than usual.

Martha: *(Rubs her eyes)* Hush. Now, what else is there? I know we brought down his chair, now where is it?

Thomas: It's right behind you.

Martha: Oh! How foolish. . . . That's senility for you. Where is the--

Thomas: You look half dead, Mother. Why don't you go to bed?

Martha: And the compliments pour forth like so much wine.

Thomas: I'm only worried. *now that if there were another way--any other way at all--that I would do it?*

Martha: There's no need. I'm not a bit tired. It's only this headache, which I cannot lose. *that. (Standing) Let's not talk of this again. It's tiresome and useless. Is this the last of his law library?*

Thomas: You won't until you lie down to rest.

Thomas: Yes. I brought it down this afternoon, remember?

Martha: There has been no time for rest. You know that.

Martha: It can't be. Why, where are his volumes of Coke?

Thomas: Come here. Does your back hurt? Let me rub those shoulders a bit.

(She sits in Jefferson's chair. THOMAS stands behind her, rubbing her shoulders.) *use a hundred times. Rest assured, they are all there.*

Martha: Thank you.

Martha: I think you're mistaken. There were more. I'm sure of it.

Thomas: Isn't that better?

Thomas: I'll check his room again later.

Martha: Much.

Martha: Thank you.

Thomas: It is almost over. After the auction, things will be easier. Just now it is as if . . . we await a death. *his breaths* But I won't find anything. *then we wait for the death.*

Martha: Or as if he dies again. His sanctuary dismantled. I feel him here yet. *tell me the anywhere. There were so many books. It's hard to remember how many . . . and where. . .*

Thomas: We all do. But even he saw the necessity of it.

Martha: I know, but it is difficult. Very difficult, indeed.

Thomas: It is the only way to clear his debts.

Martha: There was an ivory box. Mother's. Can't remember if I found it. *for nights. I hear you walking the floor all night.*

Thomas: *(Gestures to a crate)* It's there, in that crate.

Martha: No need to worry about me.

Martha: Ah, good.

Thomas: Oh, I'm not worried about you. Quite frankly, I'm concerned for myself. It's keeping me awake.

Thomas: Mother, you do know that if there were another way--any other way at all--that I would do it?

Thomas: No, you will sleep tonight, or you won't live to see it finished. A night of rest

Martha: (*Standing*) Let's not talk of this again. It's tiresome and useless. Is this the last of his law library?

Martha: Just let me sit here a moment more with his things. Before the borders come and

Thomas: Yes. I brought it down this afternoon, remember?

Martha: It can't be. Why, where are his volumes of Coke?

Thomas: They must be underneath--in that bottom crate. We've looked through these a hundred times. Rest assured, they are all there.

Thomas: Why not? Some people think me quite capable.

Martha: I think you're mistaken. There were more. I'm sure of it.

Martha: Of course you are. Why, without you, I wouldn't have. . . . As it is, I can

Thomas: I'll check his room again later. It be without his things, Thomas? What will it be? A void, I think. Just an empty room. Nothing of the home. No traces of the man at

Martha: Thank you.

Thomas: (*Under his breath*) But I won't find anything. . . . and the bull's head on the wall. The eyes seemed to follow me. Once I was running through the house, and I

Martha: I heard that, disrespectful progeny. But perhaps you're right. I can't tell . . . anymore. There were so many books. It's hard to remember how many. . . and where. . . Good Lord, but I never would have dreamt of selling them!

Thomas: Mother. . . . you, didn't he? . . . we will keep the room and the garden as well. What

Martha: And the servants! Separating families. . . . to run in the house again.

Thomas: Come, why don't you go to bed? I know you haven't slept well for nights. I hear you walking the floor all night. . . . carpenters about.

Martha: No need to worry about me. . . . rebuilding them. Constant chaos.

Thomas: Oh, I'm not worried about you. Quite frankly, I'm concerned for myself. It's keeping me awake.

Martha: Oh, hush. I will sleep when it is finished.

Thomas: No, you will sleep tonight, or you won't live to see it finished. A night of rest will make tomorrow more bearable.

Martha: Just let me sit here a moment more with his things. Before the hordes come and lay their hands on them.

Martha: What I don't understand is why you're pestering me so early. Why, it's not even

Thomas: You don't have to witness it.

You kept trying to convince me that we hadn't, when I knew all along that we had.

Martha: I cannot leave you to do it alone.

Thomas: I am ashamed.

Thomas: Why not? Some people think me quite capable.

Martha: Well, it's for the best. I won't have that sold. Will you not keep his clock?

Martha: Of course you are. Why, without you, I wouldn't have. . . . As it is, I can barely. . . *(Pause)* This room--what will it be without his things, Thomas? What will it be? A void, I think. Just an empty room. Nothing of the home. No traces of the man at all.

Thomas: It used to terrify me when I was young. The antlers and the bull's head on the wall. The eyes seemed to follow me. Once I was running through the house, and I knocked over one of his stone Indian figures. Remember, the stern seated one? Broke the head off. I was sure that the bull watched me as I scrambled to pick up the pieces. And I knew that he would tell Grandfather what I'd done before I got the chance.

Martha: He forgave you, didn't he?

Thomas: Yes. And, of course, advised me never to run in the house again.

Martha: My bedtime has become a bargaining tool?

Martha: Always lessons to be learned. It was wonderful to be a child here, wasn't it? Always excitement. Bricklayers and carpenters about.

Thomas: Tearing structures down and rebuilding them. Constant chaos.

Martha: There is no home without him, is there? What would be the point in saving anything?

Thomas: You don't mean that. to shelter me from everything. You got that quality from him, you know. It's very important in a man. Your father, God rest his soul, never

Martha: No. But oh, how I wish I did! It would be easier if his spirit weren't in all of these things.

Thomas: Now I *know* you're exhausted--talking of spirits!

Thomas: What is this fresh tactic? Sentimental speeches! You're clearly stalling for time.

Martha: What I don't understand is why you're pestering me so early. Why, it's not even eleven o'clock. Oh! We forgot his bedroom clock. I *knew* we'd forgotten something. You kept trying to convince me that we hadn't, when I knew all along that we had.

Thomas: I am ashamed. stay up too late, and you become completely delicious.

Martha: Well, it's for the best. I won't have that sold. Will you not keep his clock?

Thomas: Mother, I can't.

Thomas: Where did you ever hear such a thing?

Martha: He would want you to have it.

Martha: That's not important. What does she want? Did you tell her she cannot have

Thomas: You've said that about everything he touched.

Martha: And you've prevailed over me in every matter. You owe me one small victory. You'll keep the clock. And the bull, for that matter. He can watch over you--make sure that you behave.

Martha: She's welcome to those.

Thomas: Very well. If you go to bed, we will keep the clock and my guardian bull. What do you say?

Martha: My bedtime has become a bargaining tool?

Thomas: Life is commerce, Mother. What do you say?

Martha: I say it's suspicious. What is this urgency to get me to bed?

Thomas: I don't want you to exhaust yourself. for the family--for Father's death and for the auction of Grandfather's things. It was a . . . short exchange. She was very gracious.

Martha: My boy--always trying to shelter me from everything. You got that quality from him, you know. It's very important in a man. Your father, God rest his soul, never sheltered his family from anything. I always depended on your grandfather for that. And now I rely on you. You have worked very hard on his estate, Thomas. I know it hasn't been easy. But you've made me very proud.

Thomas: What is this fresh tactic? Sentimental speeches! You're clearly stalling for time. Come now, off you go.

Martha: Does this insistence on my bedtime have anything to do with her?

Thomas: See? I let you stay up too late, and you become completely delirious.

Martha: You know very well what I'm talking about. I heard that she came to see you the other day.

Thomas: Where did you ever hear such a thing?

Martha: That's not important. What does she want? Did you tell her she cannot have anything--that it must all be auctioned?

Thomas: She doesn't want anything.

Martha: That's too bad. I've saved some newspaper clippings and vulgar limericks for her. She's welcome to those.

Thomas: Mother, please. Be charitable.

Martha: So she doesn't want anything, then?

Thomas: No.

Martha: Don't be a fool. If she wants nothing, what did she need to discuss with you?

Thomas: She merely expressed her sympathy for the family--for Father's death and for the auction of Grandfather's things. It was a . . . short exchange. She was very gracious.

Martha: I shall try. *(Exit)*

Martha: Yes, men always find her so. So easily deceived.

(THOMAS watches her leave. He looks about room uncomfortably, glances at the bull's

Thomas: Mother, you're overwrought. *opens it, steps outside, and returns. He is*

followed by SALLY, an attractive, light-skinned woman in her fifties. Although she is

Martha: I'm not. You don't know the situation. And you certainly don't know anything of her. Gracious, indeed! If she were gracious, she would have offered her condolences to me. After all, *I* have lost my husband. And tomorrow, we auction *my father's* things. But she has never displayed any kind of graciousness or affection to me. *time, I'm afraid.*

Thomas: I'm sure that's not so. *Randolph.*

Martha: She gave me no thanks for her freedom. And she offers my son condolences, but none to me. No, I can see she hasn't changed. She may have deceived you into thinking she is sympathetic to the family, but mark my words, she came to you for her own gain.

before. . . So many memories.

Thomas: I tell you, she wants nothing!

Thomas: Yes. *We've been stumbling over them for weeks.*

Martha: I should hope not. I should hope she would have that small decency. Besides, there's nothing left for her. Nothing. *ow?*

Thomas: Of course there isn't. After all, I'm certainly not going to give up my bull.

Martha: Silly boy. But you will trust me on this matter, won't you? She is not what she seems. I know her better than you ever could.

Thomas: Almost all. One-hundred and thirty.

Thomas: I believe you. Now will you go to bed?

Sally: I see.

Martha: Very well. If you can tell me truthfully that you promised her nothing.

Thomas: And how are your sons—Madison and Edward?

Thomas: I can.

Sally: Eston. Madison and Eston. They are fine, thank you. *(Pause)*

Martha: All right, then. I'll go to sleep. Give your mother a kiss.

Thomas: I'm glad to hear it. *(Uncomfortable pause)* Well, I suppose I'll leave you then.

Thomas: There. Now sleep well. *We've had a long day here. I'll return in an hour or*

so to . . . see if you need anything.

Martha: I shall try. *(Exits)*

Sally: Thank you, Mr. Randolph. I can't tell you how much I--
(THOMAS watches her leave. He looks about room uncomfortably, glances at the bull's head, then walks to the outer door. He opens it, steps outside, and returns. He is followed by SALLY, an attractive, light-skinned woman in her fifties. Although she is only a year younger than MARTHA, she appears much younger. Only her relative slowness in movement, and tendency to live in the past betray her age.)

Thomas: She's sleeping just upstairs. I won't be able to give you much time, I'm afraid.

temporarily, of course. Why am I explaining to--always were a mean old thing.

Sally: I understand, Jeffy--Mr. Randolph. *his--oh! His precious books in crates. I never would have. . . but what did I expect? This one, I remember. . . Polished and feature.*

Thomas: Jeffy. How funny! No one has called me that since. . . *Every two pages. . . he touched. His chair. What lesser man will sit in it? I cannot think. The things he would*

Sally: Thank you for letting me come here tonight. I just want to have a look around before. . . . So many memories. *things. It does no good--remembering the beginning, and ever avoiding the end. Only makes things. . . harder. And even now, I haven't*

Thomas: Yes. We've been stumbling over them for weeks. *bit. But I see the same--senseless as ever. Never much wanted to learn certain things, I suppose. As if I*

Sally: How many will be sold tomorrow? *rowing. Never wanted to learn that this house could die. Be silent. No laughing, no birds singing. And no music.*

Thomas: I'm sorry, I don't--Oh! You mean servants? *us--quietly--I did not say. I never thought that he could end. . . . Who could imagine an end to such a man? I could not.*

Sally: Yes. . . servants. *as he ignored. . . his aging house. And now to see it come to this. . . Worse even than the night he died. Or the night I left.*

Thomas: Almost all. One-hundred and thirty. *as never over until that night. Or perhaps it isn't even over. . . now. Who knows when anything is truly ended--when it no longer*

Sally: I see. *ing to anybody? For it still means much to the children--Madison especially. And to me. Only Master Tom is not here to realize it. And if he were, what would he say*

Thomas: And how are your sons--Madison and Edward? *And me. What would he say to me? His aging child. Old goose, now. Sometimes I like to think of it. It comforts me to*

Sally: Eston. Madison and Eston. They are fine, thank you. *(Pause)* *er truly know. Can never think of anything. . . quite wonderful things. . .*

Thomas: I'm glad to hear it. *(Uncomfortable pause)* Well, I suppose I'll leave you then. I'll just. . . go upstairs and lie down. We've had a long day here. I'll return in an hour or so to . . . see if you need anything. *weapons, just as we always had. He would have*

Sally: Thank you, Mr. Randolph. I can't tell you how much I--

Thomas: You're welcome, Sally. *(Exits)*

(SALLY walks about the room slowly, touching various items. Finally, she comes to the bull's head. She stares at it a moment, then addresses it.)

Sally: Now, don't look so stern--it's only been a year. And I came back, didn't I? Only temporarily, of course. Why am I explaining to--always were a mean old thing.

(Continues walk around room) Where is his--oh! His precious books in crates. I never would have. . . but what did I expect? This one, I remember. . . Palladian architecture. Used it to build. . . this house. So many of them--familiar to me. Every last page. . . he touched. His chair. What lesser man will sit in it? I cannot think. The things he wrote while sitting there. And sometimes, I watched. . . . So proud to even watch.

I should not think of such things. It does no good--remembering the beginning, and ever avoiding the end. Only makes things. . . harder. And even now, I haven't learned. Still his child. His goose. Only the body has aged a bit. But I am the same--senseless as ever. Never much wanted to learn certain things, I suppose. As if I could protect myself from them by not knowing. Never wanted to learn that this house could die. Be silent. No laughing, no birds singing. And no music.

Even when it had already begun to decay around us--quietly--I did not see. I never thought that he could end. . . . Who could imagine an end to such a man? I could not, did not. I ignored it--just as he ignored. . . his aging house. And now to see it come to this. . . Worse even than the night he died. Or the night I left.

That last night. A funeral of sorts. It was never over until that night. Or perhaps it isn't even over. . . now. Who knows when anything is truly ended--when it no longer means anything to anybody? For it still means much to the children--Madison especially. And to me. Only Master Tom is not here to realize it. And if he were, what would he say of things? His decayed house and scattered children. . . ? And me. What would he say to me? His aging child. *Old* goose, now. Sometimes I like to think of it. It comforts me to imagine what he'd say. And other times. . . it hurts a bit--that I can never truly know. Can never think of anything. . . quite wonderful enough.

I wonder sometimes. . . what he would he have said that night I left--if he had witnessed it. Oh, he would not have approved! Not of my behavior, and not of Martha's, either. Fighting over him with silent weapons, just as we always had. He would have

hated it, but ignored it, just as he always did. Never could abide discord in his house. Which was why we kept it hidden. Even after he was gone--by then it had become second nature.

I remember I stood right *here*. It feels the same, even if it doesn't *look*. . . Martha stood with her back to me, looking out the window--just a stiff silhouette in moonlight. She knew I was behind her, knew that I'd entered the room, but she wanted to test me--see how long I could stand the silence. It was a silly test. I'd had nothing but silence from her for years. But I accepted her challenge--stood as quietly as she did, for what seemed like hours. I memorized the line of her back--that back that refused to age. Her skin had gone slack, her red hair had turned gray and her hands were wrinkled and spotted, but her back was as stiff and strong as ever.

Finally, without turning, she said my name flatly. As if the very name were distasteful to her. But then, of course, it was. That was the night she gave me my freedom. The night she finished what began in Paris all those years ago. Ever since he died, I had imagined the day when I would stand opposite Martha, and she would hand me my freedom--just as he had promised. I'd looked forward to it. All I had to look forward to, after he was gone. The last act of his life, and she was messenger. Unwilling messenger. I did not care so much about my freedom--for what is freedom to a woman who has already lived her life?--but for the day when Martha would have to acknowledge that I was. . . beloved, just as she was. She was just as determined to deny it. That was why she kept her back to me so long.

There was a time, when we were very young in Paris, that we cared for one another--a time when I was more than a servant to her. Perhaps even. . . something of a sister. She was kinder then. . . like Jeffy. In fact, he has her smile. That old smile that I haven't seen in years--so long hidden from me. In Paris, it was. . . given freely. Of course, she needed me, then. She had been lonely by herself all those months. Master Tom sent her to a convent school during the week, and his duties as ambassador left him little time for her. But when Maria and I arrived in Paris, her spirits lifted. I remember her pale, freckled arm taking mine as she showed little Maria and me the city that was to be our home, for a time. She and Maria laughed at my stories of home, Martha taught us a little French, and we paraded about my room in our fine new clothes.

But, oh, how the dressing up bored Martha! Oh, she twirled and primped with us for a while, but then she lost interest and settled down with a book, while Maria and I played at being great ladies. She'd become so angry if we were too loud. *(Laughs to herself)* Called us names. . . I can't remember what they were. She thought us vain, and we thought her too studious. The dramas of young girls fighting for their identities.

Sally: Martha's role was clear--she was much smarter than Maria and I. . . . Master Tom had groomed her, taken great pains with her education--as if to prepare her to be his life's partner. And she was clever enough to do it. And determined that no other should fill the role. He loved her for her intellect, and Maria for her beauty. And Martha, knowing hers was the greater gift in her father's eyes, came to ignore her looks.

Oh, but she looked wild and unmanageable--even when wearing the work of the finest tailors. Her red curls never stayed neatly arranged, her dresses were always rumpled. Once Master Tom chided her about it. Asked why she could not keep herself neat and tidy, as Maria and I did. I remember that pale face falling, and cool eyes darting from Maria to me, and then slowly lowering to survey herself. She sulked for days, but did not cry. I never saw her cry.

She never spoke of it, but after that, she gave up on her looks entirely--wearing only the drab colors and hairstyles of a nun. It aged her. And from that time she looked much as she looked that night, not long ago--when she kept her back to me. Master Tom said nothing of the change. Whether he knew he had caused it with his admonishment, I do not know. I only know it was the only matter in which she ever disobeyed him. In all other things, Master Tom was her guide.

Scene Two

Paris, 1787. SALLY is fourteen years of age, MARTHA is fifteen. Both girls appear almost womanly. Only their attempts to affect the mannerisms of mature ladies betray their youth. MARTHA, wearing a new dress, twirls self-consciously before her friend.

Martha: Well, Sally? What do you think? I think it might be too much.

Sally: Oh no, Martha. No one is simply dressed in Paris. And I've never seen such a beautiful color.

Martha: Papa said he fancied the color matched my eyes.

Sally: It's true.

Martha: Was there ever a more thoughtful man? It's so extravagant, though.

Sally: Master Jefferson is very thoughtful. And this fabric is so delicate, like the wings of a butterfly.

Sally: Oh, I didn't hear it at home, I heard it just after I came here. James told me. He

Martha: Papa has given me so many beautiful things. He is too generous with me, I'm afraid. But he says that while we are in Paris, we must be most careful with our dress. I never imagined a people so preoccupied with fashion!

Martha: Don't be a ninny! I could never be angry with James. Besides, he was right.

Sally: Neither did I, but I think it's wonderful. And the women seem to benefit from their preoccupation--they are all so beautiful.

Sally, but it was awful. You can't imagine. He was so taken with her. If she had not

Martha: Perhaps they are, but with all of that paint, who can tell? She occupied all of

his time--I barely saw him. And I'm quite certain she had no real affection for him--how

Sally: Martha! that silly truly understand Papa? No, I'm very glad she's left us. I'm

finally content now that you and Maria have come. Now Papa has with him the two

Martha: I cannot abide a woman who paints her face garishly, nor can Papa.

pinched and powdered face!

Sally: I heard that Maria Cosway paints her face.

Sally: Martha, you're going to spoil your pretty new dress--crushing it with your hands

Martha: Agh! The painted lady I detest the most--the celebrated "artist" Maria Cosway!

Thank heavens she has gone. I found her company tiresome. Unfortunately, Papa found it most engaging--although I can't imagine why.

terribly wrinkled, am I? Now, I've got to sit for the better part of the day while Charles

Sally: Can't you? The endless preparations for these endless dinners!

Martha: Sally, are you needling me? Sometimes I wish I could go in your stead.

of course, I feel all I can do is to work with you in the garden.

Sally: A little. I. But tonight should be better. No comely female "artists," anyway.

Only learned men and their wives.

Martha: Well, stop it. I don't like to be needled.

(JEFFERSON appears in the doorway, unlabeled by SALLY and MARTHA, and

Sally: I'm sorry. It's just that I heard that you were very jealous of her. Or at least of the time she spent with Master Jefferson.

Martha: Well, Sally? Do you think I look all right? I won't embarrass Papa, will I?

Martha: You heard that, did you?

Sally: Yes. Of course not. You could never embarrass Master Jefferson. The new dress suits

you perfectly.

Martha: Well! I had no idea the gossip stretched across the sea!

Martha: Thank you. I'm so glad I came to ask you. You always calm me.

Sally: Oh, I didn't hear it at home, I heard it just after I came here. James told me. He said your displeasure was obvious to everyone but Master Jefferson. But don't be angry with James for telling me!

Martha: Yes. The greatest drudgery of all. (Starts to leave but remembering another

Martha: Don't be a ninny! I could never be angry with James. Besides, he was right. Papa was too occupied to notice how unhappy I was. He completely abandoned me. I've never felt so desolate. In fact, dear James was my only solace much of the time. Oh, Sally, but it was awful. You can't imagine. He was so taken with her. If she had not been married, I fear he would have--well, best not to even talk of it. She occupied all of his time--I barely saw him. And I'm quite certain she had no real affection for him--how could a woman that silly truly understand Papa? No, I'm very glad she's left us. I'm finally content now that you and Maria have come. Now Papa has with him the two women who truly love and understand him, not that wretched Maria Cosway with her pinched and powdered face! *for a few weeks now.*

Sally: Martha, you're going to spoil your pretty new dress--crushing it with your hands like that.

Sally: He said that he had the time and that the servant's hairdresser was too rushed and

Martha: I know. I can't help it. *(Breathes deeply)* There. She's gone. And I'm not terribly wrinkled, am I? Now, I've got to sit for the better part of the day while Charles does my hair. Oh! The endless preparations for these endless dinners!

Sally: It's too bad you don't like them. Sometimes I wish I could go in your stead.

sake of efficiency. And as I am seen so much with you and Maria.

Martha: So do I. But tonight should be better. No comely female "artists," anyway. Only learned men and their wives.

Imagine him noticing that the servants' hairdresser is too rushed! Well, that answers it.

(JEFFERSON appears in the doorway, unobserved by SALLY and MARTHA, and watches his daughter with amusement. He is forty-four years of age.)

Sally: What do you mean?

Martha: Well, Sally? Do you think I look all right? I won't embarrass Papa, will I?

Martha: Oh, a city where everyone is so mad for fashion! Where the servants are dressed

Sally: Of course not. You could never embarrass Master Jefferson. The new dress suits you perfectly.

Sally: Yes. Senseless.

Martha: Thank you. I'm so glad I came to ask you. You always calm me.

Jefferson: *(Entering)* Martha! Isn't it time you sat for Charles? Oh is this disheveled

Sally: I'm glad. But you'd better go to Charles, hadn't you?

Martha: Yes. The greatest drudgery of all. *(Starts to leave but, remembering another matter, turns to address SALLY)* Sally, I've been meaning to ask you--that is, Charles mentioned something to me the other day that seemed strange.

Sally: What?

Martha: He said something about dressing your hair after he finished with mine. I thought that I must have misheard him. But then, your hair has looked much different lately. Has Charles been dressing your hair?

Jefferson: Come, it's not that bad.

Sally: Well, yes, he has been for a few weeks now.

Martha: Oh Papa, you're wrong. It is indeed that bad. But I'll do it. For you.

Martha: He has? I don't understand. Why?

Sally: He said that he had the time and that the servant's hairdresser was too rushed and over-worked.

Martha: Does Papa know?

Sally: I suppose so. Charles said it was Master Jefferson's suggestion--simply for the sake of efficiency. And as I am seen so much with you and Maria.

Jefferson: My daughter is in much better spirits since your arrival. Though it is nearly

Martha: That's Papa. Nothing is so small as to be beyond his notice and concern. Imagine him noticing that the servants' hairdresser is too rushed! Well, that answers it. Also, it confirms that I shall never understand Paris.

Sally: I am glad, Sir.

Sally: What do you mean?

Jefferson: And you, Sally? How do you find Paris?

Martha: Oh, a city where everyone is so mad for fashion! Where the servants are dressed in great finery, and servant's hair must look as fine as her mistress's. It's senseless, really.

Jefferson: But it is quite different from home, is it not?

Sally: Yes. Senseless.

Sally: Yes.

Jefferson: (*Entering*) Martha! Isn't it time you sat for Charles? Or is this disheveled mass of curls the new fashion?

Martha: Papa! You scared us. *mean, when you were first here?*

Jefferson: I'm sorry. But Charles is becoming upset with you. It seems he's been waiting for you for over half an hour. When I last saw him, he was contemplating shearing every last curl from your head. *it hard to. ... communicate?*

Martha: I'm sorry. I was only stretching my legs. I sit so long for Charles, I fear they'll atrophy.

Jefferson: Come, it's not that bad. *I can only understand a few words—like of conversations.*

Martha: Oh Papa, you're wrong. It is indeed that bad. But I'll do it. For you. (*She kisses him, then exits*) *me you are picking up the language quite well. In fact, she senses*

that your accent is already better than mine. But you would like to know more, would
(SALLY and JEFFERSON stand awkwardly for a few seconds. She then attempts to busy herself by tidying the room. He watches her a moment before speaking.)

Sally: Yes, Sir. I would like to understand conversations.

Jefferson: I am very grateful to you.

Jefferson: It is an admirable aspiration. I see no reason it should not be fulfilled.

Sally: Sir?

Sally: I'm sure it will come, in time.

Jefferson: My daughter is in much better spirits since your arrival. Though it is nearly impossible to be dismal in Paris, she was managing it quite well, until you and Maria came. She is content now that the family is reunited. As am I. *me, though Perrault tells me they*

are quite tumultuous. James is a bit of an unruly student, as I'm sure you can imagine.

Sally: I am glad, Sir. *take private lessons with Perrault. I'm sure I can arrange them.*

Jefferson: And you, Sally? How do you find Paris?

Sally: Oh, I'm enjoying it very much. I do not know how anyone could not love it. *copy*

you. Besides, Perrault is quite frustrated with James. I think he would be pleased to add

Jefferson: But it is quite different from home, is it not? *Yes, I will arrange it at once.*

Sally: Yes.

Jefferson: And a bit overwhelming at first.

Sally: Did you think so, too? I mean, when you were first here?

Jefferson: I am overwhelmed yet. But that is the appeal, I suppose.

Sally: Did you ever find it hard to. . . communicate?

Jefferson: Oh, yes. Of course. But one adapts, and gradually learns more of the language.

Sally: I must be slow at learning. I can only understand a few words--bits of conversations.

Jefferson: Martha tells me you are picking up the language quite well. In fact, she teases that your accent is already better than mine. But you would like to know more, would you?

Sally: Yes, Sir. I would like to understand conversations.

Jefferson: It is an admirable aspiration. I see no reason it should not be fulfilled.

Sally: I'm sure it will come, in time.

Jefferson: But perhaps you would prefer some guidance. I have hired a tutor for James--Monsieur Perrault. You are welcome to join in his lessons, though Perrault tells me they are quite tumultuous. James is a bit of an unruly student, as I'm sure you can imagine. Perhaps you'd rather take private lessons with Perrault. I'm sure I can arrange them.

Sally: Sir, that is most generous of you. But I couldn't--

Jefferson: Nonsense. You will enjoy your stay much more if you have lessons to occupy you. Besides, Perrault is quite frustrated with James. I think he would be pleased to add an obliging pupil. I only wish I'd thought of it earlier. Yes, I will arrange it at once.

Sally: For a week, I thought of nothing else. I forgot my homesickness. Forgot home.

Sally: Thank you, Sir. . . the boy at home that I was to marry, when I returned. Robert.

Yes, that was when I forgot all about Robert. At first, I tried to think of him, knowing

Jefferson: Very well. I'll leave you. Oh! One other thing, Sally.

with sharp blue eyes. And each time I remembered Master Tom's words to me, and those

Sally: Yes? . . . hands encompassing mine, I smiled.

One morning, I brought the idea of the lessons up with my brother, James. He

Jefferson: I've noticed you gazing rather longingly at Martha's harpsichord. Am I wrong to guess that you have musical interests as well?

and I turned from James, so he could not see my embarrassment. He put his arms around

Sally: Oh no, Sir. I would never imagine myself a musician. I merely admire the instrument. It is very handsome.

Jefferson: Very well. I appreciate your modesty and hesitation. It does you credit.

However, if you change your mind, I can also arrange for musical lessons. It would be no trouble.

would not allow me to think even for a day that I had been valued and esteemed. "Who

Sally: I have no reason to believe that I could play, Sir.

not forgive his laughing. . . laughing at me.

Jefferson: I hear your humming throughout the house. You seem to join all small tasks with some form of song. And you have very long, slender fingers. (*Takes her hands, observes them*) I imagine you might find yourself quite adept at the harpsichord, should you wish to pursue lessons. Would you not like to accompany your own singing?

had always understood me until. . . James missed our classroom time, though he never

Sally: Sir, I-- . . . And I felt guilty for depriving him of it--for depriving him of his

sister. But I was determined never to have him laugh at me again. And when Master Tom

Jefferson: Consider it. (*Exits*) . . . harpsichord lessons, I demurred.

James' laughter and warnings did not have the effect he intended. They did not

Sally: Thank you. I will. Tom, but instead, made me think of him as more than my master.

I began to think of him as a man--became aware of his physical presence. I grew

fascinated by the food he ate, the way he walked, the books he read. Most of all, I liked

to watch him ride out on his horse in the late afternoon. His body seemed connected to

the horse--in control of its every movement--as if he were the horse's will, and the

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829. . . . legs were extensions of his body. He was most

natural on his horse--all refined action and grace.

Sally: For a week, I thought of nothing else. I forgot my homesickness. Forgot home. Even forgot the boy . . . the boy at home that I was to marry, when I returned. Robert. Yes, that was when I forgot all about Robert. At first, I tried to think of him, knowing that I should, but I could not picture him. Another face always came to mind--a pale one with sharp blue eyes. And each time I remembered Master Tom's words to me, and those two great hands encompassing mine, I smiled.

One morning, I brought the idea of the lessons up with my brother, James. He stared at me a moment, and then burst into laughter. "Musical lessons for his slave!" he smirked. "Take care, little sister, or you'll find yourself in his bed!" My face grew hot, and I turned from James, so he could not see my embarrassment. He put his arms around me and said, "Poor little girl. I'm sorry. But this is not a courtship, even if you are in Paris. I've seen the way the Master looks at you. Do not accept anything you are not willing to pay for."

But he was of no comfort. I felt as if I were embraced by . . . an enemy. James said such things only to protect me. He wanted me to be careful, not to trust Master Tom so implicitly. I knew that. But it was James I began to distrust and resent. James who would not allow me to think even for a day that I had been valued and esteemed. Who had reminded me that I was a servant, when Master Tom had let me forget. And I could not forgive his laughing. . . laughing at me.

It changed us both. We were . . . different with each other. I no longer confided in him. I stopped my late night visits to his room, where we had laughed and shared our troubles. I missed resting my head on his strong shoulder, and telling him all my thoughts--even the ugly or ridiculous ones. Missed his comforting voice--that voice that had always understood me until . . . James missed our closeness too, though he never spoke of its passing. And I felt guilty for depriving him of it--for depriving him of his sister. But I was determined never to have him laugh at me again. And when Master Tom inquired again about the harpsichord lessons, I demurred.

James' laughter and warnings did not have the effect he intended. They did not make me leery of Master Tom, but instead, made me think of him as more than my master. I began to think of him as a man--became aware of his physical presence. I grew fascinated by the food he ate, the way he walked, the books he read. Most of all, I liked to watch him ride out on his horse in the late afternoon. His body seemed connected to the horse--in control of its every movement--as if he were the horse's mind, and the horse's glistening flanks and surging legs were extensions of his body. He was most natural on his horse--all refined action and grace.

James: But watching him ride out each day was not enough, and so I created reasons to see him. I think he began to suspect my growing affection for him. I was never so happy as when in sight of his cool eyes which seemed to thaw and sparkle like liquid fire when I was near.

James: One day he appointed me as his chamber maid. And I was happy. I did not mind tending to the . . . the human things which were never spoken of--those tasks so unpleasant to the personal servant. I performed them gladly in exchange for the intimacy the position gave me--an intimacy that even Martha did not have. I saw him and talked with him more frequently. And I was custodian of his most precious belongings. I remember that, at first, it made me nervous. I tended his things with the greatest of care--terrified that I might break or misplace something important (as, I was sure, all of his things must be). But soon, those objects became familiar, and I did not fear them. In time, they seemed . . . almost mine.

James: Most of all, in those early days, I worried about James' reaction. I kept the news of my new appointment from him as long as I could--which, of course, was only a matter of days.

James: Do not. I'll swear on it when . . . Scene Three . . . to the house.

A park in Paris, 1788. JAMES HEMINGS, an attractive, boisterous young man of twenty-three, is seated on a bench. He is drunk. SALLY, now fifteen, walks to meet him. She has matured somewhat--having naturally adopted the carriage and mannerisms of a woman.

Sally: Mama would whip you senseless if she were here!

James: Here she comes. You're late, little sister.

James: She wouldn't. Mama knows a working man needs to drink. Why, even Master

Sally: What do you laugh at, James?

James: You. Walking out here all dignified like you're fixing to meet the Queen. . . . himself when he drinks.

Sally: You're drunk.

James: I don't either. I only know one person who's making a fool of themselves, and

James: Why, Sally! The sun's still setting. I never drink this early. You know that.

Sally: You're lying. You smell of whiskey. . . . night, I have a lot of work to do.

James: Do not. Now you're busy. This won't take long. Then you can get back to work in the master's room.

Sally: Do so.

Sally: You've heard.

James: Do not.

James: Yes, I heard you're his chamber maid now. What I want to know is, why didn't

Sally: If you haven't been drinking whiskey today, you'd best take a bath because you're saturated with it from yesterday.

Sally: I haven't had the time. And it isn't important, is it?

James: I can't smell a thing.

James: Ha! It's important, and you know it.

Sally: Another bad sign.

Sally: It isn't.

James: I'm not drunk. I'll swear on Mama's Bible if you want.

James: It is, and you know damn well it is, or you wouldn't have kept it from me.

Sally: Oh, James. You only say that because the Bible's not here!

Sally: Hush. You're making a scene.

James: Do not. I'll swear on it when we get back to the house.

James: Sorry. Don't want to embarrass you. No, no. Don't want to embarrass the fine

Sally: You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Swearing lies on Mama's Bible.

James: I'm not the only one ought to be ashamed. Why would I keep anything from my brother? It's only that I haven't seen you. And I didn't think it was important.

Sally: Mama would whip you senseless if she were here!

James: Didn't think it was important. She didn't think it was important.

James: She wouldn't. Mama knows a working man needs to drink. Why, even Master Jefferson understands the need to drink.

Sally: Master Jefferson drinks wine, not whiskey. And he doesn't make a fool of himself when he drinks.

Sally: What are you talking about?

James: I don't either. I only know one person who's making a fool of themselves, and it's not me. Now a satisfied woman when I see one.

Sally: I don't have time to argue with you all night, I have a lot of work to do.

James: Oh, I know you're busy. This won't take long. Then you can get back to work in the master's room.

Sally: You've heard.

James: Yes, I heard you're his chamber maid now. What I want to know is, why didn't you tell me?

Sally: I haven't had the time. And it isn't important, is it?

James: Ha! It's important, and you know it.

Sally: It isn't.

James: It is, and you know damn well it is, or you wouldn't have kept it from me.

Sally: Hush. You're making a scene.

James: Sorry. Don't want to embarrass you. No, no. Don't want to embarrass the fine Miss Hemings.

Sally: You are so coarse when you drink. Besides, why would I keep anything from my brother? It's only that I haven't seen you. And I didn't think it was important.

James: Didn't think it was important. *She didn't think it was important.*

Sally: James.

James: Well, you got what you wanted, didn't you?

Sally: What are you talking about?

James: I know a satisfied woman when I see one.

Sally: What in Heaven's name--

James: Master Jefferson. I saw the way you looked at him. Now you get to see him all the time. That's what you wanted, wasn't it?

Sally: If you take one more drink, I'm leaving.

Sally: Don't be ridiculous.

James: Wait! I'm just trying to sort my thoughts, that's all.

James: And now you're taking private French lessons, aren't you?

Sally: What are you trying to say?

Sally: And what does that signify? You take private French lessons!

James: I'm trying to say... I want to ask... Boy, a man sure is a funny thing! *(Drinks)*

James: Sally, are we going to have a real talk, or not? If we're going to have a real talk, fine. If not, I'm going to need more whiskey. *(Takes a flask from his coat)*

Sally: Stop that!

Sally: I knew you were drunk. You give me that.

James: Yes, he's a funny thing. I bring you out here, all ready to comfort you about

James: Hands off, now. Now I'm scared to ask you. I'm scared that... that if you haven't done anything yet, I'm going to be putting ideas in your head.

Sally: If Master Jefferson saw you like this, he'd--

Sally: I don't want to talk about this.

James: I don't care a *damn* about Master Jefferson!

James: But then we both know that the idea is already in your head. Been in your head a

Sally: Don't say things like that. You'll get yourself into terrible trouble, and Mama's not here to get you out of it.

Sally: What idea?

James: Oh, hush. I won't get into any trouble. Besides, now I'm connected! Why, my little sister's the master's chamber maid.

James: You'd better be!

Sally: James, you put that away right now. People will see you.

Sally: Yes.

James: You're not my mother. Right out, just as soon as I take another drink. *(Drinks)*

There. Now I'm ready. Sally... Sally... you Master Jefferson's concubine?

Sally: Someone has to correct you--acting wild all of the time, getting drunk every night.

Sally: No, I'm not.

James: I didn't ask you here to talk about me.

James: *(Bursts into laughter)* Sally Hemings! There's no help for you!

Sally: Fine. What did you want to talk about? Put that thing away! You make no sense at all.

James: Well, I . . . Sally, I want you to be. . . Hm! *(Drinks from flask)* . . .

Sally: If you take one more drink, I'm leaving.

James: Wait! I'm just trying to sort my thoughts, that's all.

Sally: What are you trying to say?

James: I'm trying to say. . . I want to ask. . . Boy, a man sure is a funny thing! *(Drinks again)*

Sally: Stop that!

James: Yes, he's a funny thing. I bring you out here, all ready to confront you about Master Jefferson, and now I'm scared to ask you. I'm scared that. . . that if you haven't done anything yet, I'm going to be putting ideas in your head.

Sally: I don't want to talk about this.

James: But then we both know that the idea is already in your head. Been in your head a long time.

Sally: What idea?

James: Deceitful woman. Don't you hide yourself from me.

Sally: I'm not being deceitful. I don't know what you mean.

James: All right. I'll ask you straight out. Just as soon as I take another drink. *(Drinks)* There. Now I'm ready. Sally. . . Sally. . . you Master Jefferson's concubine?

Sally: No, I'm not.

James: *(Bursts into laughter)* Sally Hemings! There's no help for you!

Sally: What are you laughing at? James, put that thing away! You make no sense at all.

James: No, I make lots of sense. I see everything perfectly. You only wish I didn't see, don't you? Say I don't know what I'm talking about because I'm drunk. Well, I could drink myself blind, and still see that you're just waiting for him to call for you. I ask you if you're his concubine, and you're not surprised I ask. Because we both know what's on your mind. I ask you if you're his concubine, and all you can say is "No, I'm not." As if you're sad about it. You want to be his concubine! That's why I say there's no help for you! No, there isn't. Lord, help you!

Sally: Let me get you home.

James: I've seen the way you look at him. And I know women. I know what that look means. I've never even seen you look at a man that way before. Not even Robert. No, you never looked at him like that. I don't suppose you even think about poor old Robert now, do you? Poor old Robert--sitting home waiting for you. Women!

Sally: Oh, and you know so much about women, do you?

James: I know enough.

Sally: Men always think they know all about women.

James: Sally, do you think about Robert?

Sally: Of course I do.

James: You do? Honest?

Sally: Yes.

James: Do you compare him to Master Jefferson?

Sally: Here, put your arm around me.

James: Do you compare Robert to Master Jefferson?

Sally: What a silly question. There is no comparison.

James: (*Flopping onto bench*) See? One day, you'll learn that. Now, you listen to me.

I've given this a lot of thought, and the way I see it, you can use this to your advantage.

Sally: James, stand up! You handle it. I want you to know I'm here to help you. Help you to handle it right.

James: "There is no comparison." Fickle, fickle woman.

Sally: I don't understand.

Sally: I didn't mean it that way, and you know it.

James: I know you don't. You're just a child. May look like a woman now, but you're

James: Only one way to mean it. Free soil! If we stay in Paris, we're free. Don't you know that?

Sally: I don't know what to do with you. I wish Mama were here.

Sally: I hadn't—

James: It's all right. I know what you meant. Besides, you can't help yourself. None of them can. Just let me talk a little longer. want to go back to Virginia. And I want you to stay here with me.

Sally: I don't think I want to hear any more.

Sally: How could we stay?

James: I'll be good. You just sit down here, and listen to your brother for a minute.

James: It's simple. I'm becoming a chef. In Paris, I can earn wages. I'm earning wages.

Sally: And then you promise you'll go home?

James: I promise. enough to live on, James. You know that.

Sally: All right. I'm listening. ask him for wages. You ask him for wages. He'll do it for you. Just like he gave you French lessons, and that dress you're wearing. He'll give

James: What I want to tell you is . . . I see what's going to happen. I've seen it coming for a long time. The way you look at Master Jefferson, and the way he looks at you. And I know that I can't stop you. I only asked you out here to . . . advise you.

James: You say, "enough to live on," we'll have you enough to live on. You'll see.

Sally: Advise me? he leaves, maybe we will have saved enough to live. You play it smart,

Sally: You get all you can from him.

James: Yes. I know you think that I can't even take care of myself, but I'm a man and I know how men think. Mama? Why, we might never see her again if we don't go back to Virginia!

Sally: How men like *you* think, maybe. Not men like Master Jefferson.

James: Men are all the same, Sally. One day, you'll learn that. Now, you listen to me. I've given this a lot of thought, and the way I see it, you can use this to your advantage. It's all in the way that you handle it. I want you to know I'm here to help you. Help you to handle it right.

Sally: It would never work. We could never save enough money--

Sally: I don't understand.

James: Yes we could! But you've got to want it. That's the only problem. I don't know

James: I know you don't. You're just a child. May look like a woman now, but you're still just a child. Sally, we're on free soil! If we stay in Paris, we're free. Don't you know that?

Sally: I hadn't--

James: I want to stay here. I don't ever want to go back to Virginia. And I want you to stay here with me.

James: We don't owe him anything! Don't you know that?

Sally: How could we stay?

Sally: But he's given us so much!

James: It's simple. I'm becoming a chef. In Paris, I can earn wages. I'm earning wages now from Master Jefferson!

Sally: But it's not enough to live on, James. You know that.

James: That's why you need to ask him for wages. You ask him for wages. He'll do it for you. Just like he gave you French lessons, and that dress you're wearing. He'll give you that and more if you're his.

Sally: I'm not!

Sally: I don't understand. I thought you didn't want me to--

James: You pay attention to what's going on around you, instead of chasing after the

James: And when he leaves, maybe we will have saved enough to live. You play it smart, Sally. You get all you can from him.

Sally: There's no need to be insulting.

Sally: But what about Mama? Why, we might never see her again if we don't go back to Virginia!

Sally: I'm sorry.

Sally: Just because it's hard for me to--

James: Sally, Sally. I've got so much to teach you, haven't I? Got to teach you to start thinking for yourself. Mama can't help you, and she can't help me. She never could. But she'd want us to get our freedom any way we can. You know she would.

Sally: You've said enough.

Sally: It would never work. We could never save enough money--

James: But do you understand?

James: Yes we could! But you've got to want it. That's the only problem. I don't know if you want it.

Sally: I don't know either. I think I do. I never thought I could--

Master Jefferson, you'll get as much as you can? For both of us.

James: You can.

Sally: I promise.

Sally: But we'd be abandoning Master Jefferson.

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

James: We don't owe him anything! Don't you know that?

Sally: James, James. Far more fragile than we ever knew. He never found what he

Sally: But he's given us so much!

would have known were... only dreams. And when he finally realized that those dreams

James: He's taken a lot, too. Damn it, don't you see what he's taken?

From that day, he was always at my ear with talk of freedom and the life that he

Sally: What about Martha and Maria?

revolution, James talked of his own revolution. He asked about my progress with Master

James: They'll get along just fine without you. Don't you know you're not special? Just another servant to them. . . . a betrayal of my time with Master Tom--the most valued

moments of my day. For in my mind, I had embarked on an exciting courtship. One that I

Sally: I'm not! consummated, though I didn't know when. In James' mind, I was a bargaining tool, and the consummation was the exchange of goods: my body for our

James: You pay attention to what's going on around you, instead of chasing after the master, and maybe you'll see it.

at I created my diary--out of old writing paper and ribbon.

I wrote down all the things I used to confide to James--things that I could no longer share new clothes and trinkets. A description of each thing that Master Tom gave me, so that I

James: I'm sorry. ember them--that he had given them to me, that they had been mine.

At the end of each entry, I recorded my encounters with Master Tom. The words

Sally: Just because it's hard for me to-- talk with me of Monticello. Smiled at my odd

James: I know. You're just a child. I know. But if you're going to be Master Jefferson's you'd better get what you can out of it. That's all I'm saying. You get what you can.

Sally: You've said enough. Always had been. The things they said, and more interesting

still, the things they didn't say. Naturally, Master Tom was the person that I observed

James: But do you understand?

Sally: I do. Let's go home now. *Scene Four*

James: First, you promise me, Sally. Promise me that if you. . . if you go to bed with Master Jefferson, you'll get as much as you can? For both of us.

Sally: I promise.

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: James, James. Far more fragile than we ever knew. He never found what he wanted. Never knew what he wanted, really. He chased the dreams that any sober man would have known were. . . only dreams. And when he finally realized that those dreams could never be, well he. . . Poor James. Poor, poor man.

From that day, he was always at my ear with talk of freedom and the life that he imagined we could have had in Paris. As we walked around that city choked with revolution, James talked of his own revolution. He asked about my progress with Master Tom, and talked coarsely of ways in which I might speed the seduction. I hated those conversations. They seemed a betrayal of my time with Master Tom--the most valued moments of my day. For in my mind, I had embarked on an exciting courtship. One that I knew would be consummated, though I didn't know when. In James' mind, I was a bargaining tool, and the consummation was the exchange of goods: my body for our freedom.

It was about this time that I created my diary--out of old writing paper and ribbon. I wrote down all the things I used to confide to James--things that I could no longer share with him. And I recorded other things--my progress in French, small inventories of my new clothes and trinkets. A description of each thing that Master Tom gave me, so that I would always remember them--that he had given them to me, that they had been mine.

Sally: At the end of each entry, I recorded my encounters with Master Tom. The words he said, and how he said them. He liked to talk with me of Monticello. Smiled at my odd

bits of gossip, laughed at my failure to recall when crops came to harvest. He once said that I spent too much time watching people, and not enough observing nature. For a time after that, I tried to pay attention to birds, flowers and crops like Master Tom did, but I was more drawn to people. Always had been. The things they said, and more interesting still, the things they didn't say. Naturally, Master Tom was the person that I observed most closely.

Sally: Yes, Sir.

Scene Four

Jefferson: Well, I'd be happy to add any little message to the package I send home. I Jefferson's study in Paris, 1788. SALLY sits on the floor beside a wastepaper basket. Having dumped its contents on the floor, she works at unfolding and flattening old pieces of paper. Within several seconds, JEFFERSON enters. He observes her a moment before she notices his presence.

Sally: Master Jefferson! I'm sorry about the mess, I-- I don't mean to write a letter.

Jefferson: Good Heavens, Sally, what do you do there?

Sally: I hope you don't mind. I was only collecting some writing paper. For myself. That is, if you don't mind.

Jefferson: You were dishonest, then?

Jefferson: I see.

Sally: (In the manner of a confession) Master Jefferson, I use the paper to keep a diary. (Embarrassed, SALLY scoops the remaining crumpled papers back into the basket in several clumsy motions.) You need not look so guilty, Sally. As if you confess to some great crime.

Sally: Well, this should be enough, I think. I'll just--

Sally: I should have told you the truth when you asked. It's only that I was...

Jefferson: And to what use do you put the paper? Drawings?

Sally: Sometimes, Sir.

Jefferson: But not this time?

Sally: I don't need the paper for anything in particular. In fact, I'll just put it all back in the--

Jefferson: Please. Keep what you have found.

Sally: (*Clasping flattened pieces to her chest*) Thank you.

Jefferson: Do you mean to write your mother with it?

Sally: Yes, Sir.

Jefferson: Well, I'd be happy to add any little message to the package I send home. I meant to send it today, but it can wait until you've written your letter. Only, I don't think you ought to use that paper. Why, look! I've spoiled it with my scratches and figures. Your mother may have difficulty reading it. (*Opens drawer, extracts several fresh sheets*) Here, will this be enough?

Sally: Oh, yes. Thank you, Master Jefferson. Only. . . I don't mean to write a letter.

Jefferson: But you just said that you did.

Sally: I know.

Jefferson: You were dishonest, then?

Sally: (*In the manner of a confession*) Master Jefferson, I use the paper to keep a diary.

Jefferson: (*Amused*) You need not look so guilty, Sally. As if you confess to some great crime.

Sally: I should have told you the truth when you asked. It's only that I was. . . embarrassed.

Jefferson: But, why?

Sally: Keeping a diary is. . . silly and frivolous.

Jefferson: And personal. (*SALLY nods in agreement*) Well, it has been my experience that nothing personal is ever silly or frivolous. What do you keep in your diary? Or does that question subject you to further humiliation?

Sally: I keep. . . I write my experiences. Since I came to Paris. . . so much has happened, that I wanted to keep a record.

Sally: Several weeks ago, I suppose.

Jefferson: Ah, the travel notes of young Sally. Tell me, have you recorded much on the vegetation and flora? *prompted this resolve?*

Sally: I'm afraid I haven't. *sinful.*

Jefferson: Oh, yes. I remember, now. You have little interest in nature. Well, then. What do you record in your diary?

Sally: And I don't care for it when people gossip about me.

Sally: The events of the day, mostly.

Jefferson: It is unpleasant, isn't it?

Jefferson: And probably odd bits of gossip? Oh, Sally. I am disappointed. I must ask you to return my paper. *And if I don't like it, I certainly should say but he not to do it to others, shouldn't I?*

Sally: Yes, Sir. (*Holding out paper*)

Jefferson: It stands to reason. Yet you've always enjoyed bits of gossip in the past. Why

Jefferson: (*Laughing*) I am not serious, Sally. You may keep the paper, and do with it what you will. But I will say that I think you waste those sharp eyes on the more mundane doings of man.

Sally: I don't mean to, Master Jefferson. And I would never waste your paper that way. Never. *know.*

Jefferson: If only others were as careful with paper. *will be difficult to obtain from gossip-having so thoroughly enjoyed it?*

Sally: Sir?

Sally: Oh, yes. It will be. It already is.

Jefferson: Nothing. You were saying.

Jefferson: But you are determined.

Sally: I was finished. But I will say that I've been trying very hard not to gossip.

Jefferson: You have?

Sally: Yes. It is a new resolution.

Jefferson: When did this start?

Sally: Several weeks ago, I suppose.

Jefferson: And what prompted this resolve?

Sally: I have read that it is sinful.

Jefferson: It is.

Sally: And I don't care for it when people gossip about me.

Jefferson: It is unpleasant, isn't it?

Sally: Yes. And hurtful. And if I don't like it, I certainly should try harder not to do it to others, shouldn't I?

Jefferson: It stands to reason. Yet you've always enjoyed bits of gossip in the past. Why, when you arrived here you were full of amusing gossip and stories. I remember you mimicked poor Isaac shamelessly--had the girls and I panting with laughter. You seemed to enjoy the attention.

Sally: I know it. I am ashamed now. Laughter at poor Isaac's expense! At least he doesn't know.

Jefferson: That is fortunate. But don't you think it will be difficult to abstain from gossip--having so thoroughly enjoyed it?

Sally: Oh, yes. It will be. It already is.

Jefferson: But you are determined.

Sally: I am. Otherwise, I'm afraid God would be only fair in allowing other people to gossip about me.

Jefferson's study in Paris, 1788. SALLY moves slowly and mechanically, sighing
 Jefferson: Ah, now it comes out. And you're certain that God keeps a close tally?

Sally: I'm not certain about anything, Master Jefferson. I only try to behave morally.

Jefferson: And protect yourself from the wagging tongues of others.

Sally: Well, isn't that why all people behave morally? *(JEFFERSON laughs)*

You've folded that four times. Each time it looks exactly the same, and yet you are
Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: The next morning, by my bed, I found a small leather book. I knew instantly that it was from Master Tom, though I couldn't imagine when he had placed it there. Had he come into my room in the night, bent over me while I slept? My hands caressed the clean white paper that I would fill in time with memories of him. And on the book's first page, he had written a message to me. An inscription. It read, "To Sally Hemings, so that she might daily record both her time in Paris, and moral growth." I traced his letters with my index finger, experiencing that familiar joy of touching something he had touched. I placed the book, now my greatest treasure, inside a drawer, beneath my nightshirts and stockings.

No, no. I'll not have you up all night fiddling. You're not doing any
Finish That evening, he asked if I had found my book. A warm moment. . . still of some comfort. Even now. He clasped my hands in his two great ones, saying, "I hope you will record not just the events of your day, but expand your interest to the study of nature." He smiled at me--so direct and attentive. Made me important for a moment. It almost frightened me.

resumes her work. He resumes his writing but soon returns his attention to her.) His was a difficult request, and it intensified my loneliness. I could no longer fill my diary with records of my encounters with him, lest he ask to see my writing. And even if I had wished to gossip, I did not have any gossip to write. I was quickly becoming alienated from the other house servants who seemed to. . . notice Master Tom's preference for me. That is always the way. A favored servant enjoys the respect of the other servants, but seldom their friendship. I no longer talked with James, because he did not understand me. I did not confide in Martha or Maria. How could I? How could I share with anyone my private thoughts and worries?

the whole house dreary. You are
clearly upset about something. You would feel better if you would talk to someone.

Sally: Perhaps I would.

Scene Five

Jefferson's study in Paris, 1788. SALLY moves slowly and mechanically, sighing pensively in mid-task. JEFFERSON stops his writing periodically to observe her.

Sally: Oh, yes. Very much. But that's not what is. . . . I mean, it is nothing. I suppose I

Jefferson: Is something the matter?

Sally: No, Master Jefferson. *(Sighs)* *(fore him)* You look healthy enough. Have you been sleeping well?

Jefferson: I see. *(Resumes writing, but soon stops to observe her slow, sighing progress)* You've folded that four times. Each time it looks exactly the same, and yet you are displeased. Very strange behavior.

Jefferson: No circles under your eyes. And they are bright and clear as ever. Do you feel

Sally: I can't seem to get it right, Sir.

Jefferson: It looks very fine to me. You have but to put it in the drawer. *(She reluctantly does so)* Ah! Now the unhappy business of arranging the next. How many tries will it take to fold this one to your liking? *over-worked?*

Sally: I'm sorry, Sir. I'm disturbing you. I'll come back later to finish them.

Jefferson: No, no. I'll not have you up all night folding. You're not disturbing me. Finish them now.

Sally: Thank you. *have plenty of time to study during the day. Perhaps too much time.*

(Sighing, she resumes her work. He resumes his writing but soon returns his attention to her.) *ult will be disappointed. He is quite fond of you.*

Jefferson: Now, Sally, what has upset you? *I think I'm ungrateful for the lessons. They are the happiest hours of my day. I am just-*

Sally: It is nothing.

Jefferson: Tired, I know. Him! Come, sit here and tell me about it.

Jefferson: Come, come. You've been in low spirits all morning. All week, really. Our little mockingbird no longer sings, but sighs. It makes the whole house dreary. You are clearly upset about something. You would feel better if you would talk to someone.

Sally: Perhaps I would. *(She sits)* Now, what is bothering you?

Jefferson: Do you miss your mother? *(He looks a little lonely)* Master Jefferson. That is all.

Sally: Oh, yes. Very much. But that's not what is. . . . I mean, it is nothing. I suppose I am only tired.

Jefferson: Come here. *(She stands before him)* You look healthy enough. Have you been sleeping well?

Sally: Yes, Sir. *(He looks at her)* Are that's not so. I often see you two together.

Jefferson: No circles under your eyes. And they are bright and clear as ever. Do you feel ill at all?

Jefferson: Ah, has James fallen prey to the temptations of Paris, then?

Sally: No. *(He looks thoughtful)*

Sally: I don't know, Sir. He would not share such things with me.

Jefferson: Hm! Peculiar. Are you over-worked?

Jefferson: No, he wouldn't. Nor should he. But what of Martha and Maria? You see

Sally: No, Sir. *(He looks at her)* Do they not cheer you? *(He looks thoughtful)*

Jefferson: And you haven't been keeping yourself up to all hours studying for your lessons? *(He looks thoughtful)* foolish to have taken your time. Excuse me. *(She rises to leave)*

Sally: Oh, no. I have plenty of time to study during the day. Perhaps too much time. *(He looks thoughtful)* that one can be lonely even when one is in constant company. That is a part of living. I'm

Jefferson: Too much time to study? My, my--you are tired of your lessons, then. *(He looks thoughtful)* who are Perrault will be disappointed. He is quite fond of you. *(He looks thoughtful)* feel that way about your mother.

If she were here, you would not feel so lonely, would you?

Sally: No, Master Jefferson! Oh, please don't think I'm ungrateful for the lessons. They are the happiest hours of my day. I am just--

Jefferson: Tired, I know. Hm! Come, sit here and tell me about it. *(He looks thoughtful)* is she not?

Sally: You are busy. I've taken enough of your time.

Jefferson: Nonsense. *(She sits)* Now, what is bothering you?

Sally: It's only that I am a little. . . I am a little lonely, Master Jefferson. That is all.

Jefferson: Lonely. I see. That is a problem. But you have James. Do you not talk with James?

Sally: He is. . . very busy with his cooking and. . . James is a man now. He has no time for his sister.

Jefferson: I'm sure that's not so. I often see you two together.

Sally: It's not the same. I can't explain it, but he has changed.

Jefferson: Ah, has James fallen prey to the temptations of Paris, then?

Sally: I don't know, Sir. He would not share such things with me.

Jefferson: No, he wouldn't. Nor should he. But what of Martha and Maria? You see them every weekend. Do they not cheer you?

Sally: Oh yes. They are very good to me, Master Jefferson. Please don't--I'm sorry, I feel very foolish to have taken your time. Excuse me. *(She rises to leave)*

Jefferson: *(Reaching for her hand)* I know what it is to be lonely, Sally. And I know that one can be lonely even when one is in constant company. That is a part of living, I'm afraid. But there are certain people with whom one always feels at ease. People who are of comfort to us, and ease our loneliness. I'm sure you feel that way about your mother. If she were here, you would not feel so lonely, would you?

Sally: I suppose not.

Jefferson: No, you would not. Because your mother is home to you, is she not?

Sally: Yes. She is home.

Jefferson: You are a bit of home to me, Sally. Did you know that?

Sally: I didn't. I'd hoped--

Jefferson: You'd hoped, had you? *(Laughs)* You are very young, aren't you? You haven't yet learned to hide your feelings.

Sally: Master Jefferson, I--

Sally: Oh, but I have. These past weeks I've done nothing but hide them. That is why I am--

Jefferson: I'm sorry. I don't mean to laugh. I am happy to be a balm to your loneliness, as you have been one to mine. But there is one difficulty--there is nothing left for you to

Jefferson: Lonely. I see. So you've kept secrets from James, then?

Sally: No, not secrets. It's only that. . . . James is so changed, he is no longer. . . home to me.

Jefferson: No, no. Don't. You have done enough work today. Sit here, by me. Look

Jefferson: And have you not changed as well? And while you read, I'll write my letters.

How's that? Much better than folding and re-folding, isn't it?

Sally: I suppose so. How could I not?

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Jefferson: Just so. You are much different than when you first arrived, though perhaps you do not see it. Not quite the child you were when you first helped little Maria out of the carriage. Yet you remind me of home. Perhaps more than anyone here. Martha and James have been away as long as I. And Maria has not been there since she was a baby. You do not know what a comfort it is to me to look on you, who descended my mountain but months ago.

his smile, though I kept my eyes on the page, pretending not to notice him--pretending that I had been reading the whole time, instead of watching him out of the

Sally: I am glad.

I hated the ticking of the clock. I knew eventually it would chime the signal that I

Jefferson: Perhaps I can help you then, as you have helped me. Is there a secret you are afraid to tell? Are you in any kind of trouble?

chimes died away with his pen still on the page, I was relieved. I had won another hour

Sally: No, Master Jefferson. ably came when he set down his pen, rubbed his tired eyes,

stretched those long limbs, and declared that he would go riding.

Jefferson: I am glad to hear it. You are a good girl. So it is only this loneliness, then?

room seemed a different place. Hardly the spot where only moments ago, I had been

Sally: Yes. ighed, thinking of the prospect of another night of waiting. Another night

Jefferson: And are you lonely here with me?

Sally: Never.

Jefferson: Is that why you have folded everything four times?

Sally: Master Jefferson, I--

Jefferson: I'm sorry. I don't mean to laugh. I am happy to be a balm to your loneliness, as you have been one to mine. But there is one difficulty--there is nothing left for you to fold.

Sally: I can dust. That is, if it won't bother you.

Jefferson: No, no. Don't. You have done enough work today. Sit here, by me. Look through my books and pick something to read. And while you read, I'll write my letters. How's that? Much better than folding and re-folding, isn't it?

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: And it was. I sat next to him and. . . pretended to read. But I couldn't concentrate. I was too happy to concentrate. And too aware of his every movement--each time he leaned forward or rustled papers, there seemed to be a chorus in my mind saying, "I am here, I am here beside him." Every so often, he turned to observe me. I could feel his smile, though I kept my eyes on the page, pretending not to notice him--pretending that I had been reading the whole time, instead of watching him out of the corner of my eye.

I hated the ticking of the clock. I knew eventually it would chime the signal that I was to leave, that my temporary contentment would close like his door behind me. And I would pass another night in an agony of loneliness and waiting. Each time the clock's chimes died away with his pen still on the page, I was relieved. I had won another hour with him. But the time inevitably came when he set down his pen, rubbed his tired eyes, stretched those long limbs, and declared that he would go riding.

Sally: I watched his tall form ride away from the study window. Turning around, the room seemed a different place. Hardly the spot where only moments ago, I had been content. I sighed, thinking of the prospect of another night of waiting. Another night

until . . . It was then that I knew there would never be enough time with him. That there never could be.

Martha (Sits in chair) I sat in the chair--his chair--and looked at the smaller one that I had abandoned, and wondered what he had seen when he had looked at it. When he had looked at me. From his great height, from his fine chair, I must have looked quite small, indeed. I touched the desk where his hand had rested--careful not to move or even touch any of his papers. Careful not to leave a sign that I had sat in his place--trying to see myself through his eyes.

SALLY looks to the side, as if again surveying the smaller chair. She then stares at a crate beside her and, with a start, rises--plucking a small pillow from it.

Martha Pillow! My pillow. The one I started in Paris. For this chair, in his study. My, how the string has yellowed on my poor little bird. Cicero, you have seen better days. Cicero. His favorite bird when we were in France. Later there were others, but I don't think he ever forgot old Cicero. He trusted Master Tom so, and perched upon him--even drowsing on his leg.

Martha I often tried to sketch his birds. But Cicero was the only one who stayed put long enough. He seemed to need Master Tom--and was never far from him. As if he couldn't stand to be separated. . . any more than I could. Anymore than Martha could. He was happiest on Master Tom's shoulder. That is when he sang. And when Master Tom turned to listen, that bird seemed to know it--seemed to sing louder and higher--performing. And Master Tom! Why, he loved that bird so, he gave it food from his own lips.

Martha: My eyes are fine, thank you. Scene Six resumes her reading, SALLY unconsciously resumes humming. Sally!

A sitting room in Paris, 1788. MARTHA reads a book, while SALLY occupies herself with needlework--humming as she sews. Both have matured greatly--now seeming to be, in all aspects, grown women.

Martha: A bit. . .

Martha: Sally, stop that.

Sally: Just like Master Jefferson.

Sally: Pardon?

Martha: Yes, just like Papa.

Martha: The humming.

Sally: Humming? I shouldn't read. Doesn't reading make it worse?

Martha: Yes, you've been humming incessantly all morning.

Sally: I'm sorry. I hadn't-- You look very pale today. Why don't you lie down, and I'll bring you something to drink.

Martha: You hadn't realized you were humming, had you? Honestly, you're getting as bad as Papa. (*SALLY smiles*) You are in high spirits today. Is there any particular reason? I'll draw the curtains, and you needn't fetch me a drink. Let's sit here *silently*. I only want to read my book.

Sally: No.

(*SALLY nods, returning to her needlework. MARTHA attempts to read, but finds it too*

Martha: Nothing special has happened? (*companion*)

Sally: No. But it is a beautiful day. The sun has come back. Everything is better when the sun is shining.

Sally: A pillow. The front panel for a pillow.

Martha: Yes. It has been gray too long this winter. (*Shields her eyes momentarily*)

Martha: What is that in the center. . . some kind of bird?

Sally: Is something wrong?

Sally: A mockingbird. It will be a mockingbird. Though it doesn't much look like one.

Martha: No, nothing.

Sally: Do your eyes bother you again? Shall I draw the curtains?

Martha: My eyes are fine, thank you. (*MARTHA resumes her reading, SALLY unconsciously resumes humming*) Sally!

Martha: I think you did very well. After all, a bird is a difficult subject--they are in

Sally: I'm sorry. Your poor head aches, doesn't it?

Martha: A bit. . . this particular one liked very much to rest on Master Jefferson, so he was easier.

Sally: Just like Master Jefferson.

Martha: Ah, that is Cicero, then.

Martha: Yes, just like Papa.

Sally: Cicero?

Sally: Perhaps you shouldn't read. Doesn't reading make it worse?

Martha: Nonsense.

Sally: Martha, I'm worried. You look very pale today. Why don't you lie down, and I'll bring you something to drink.

Martha: No, Sally. I needn't stop reading, and I needn't lie down, and you needn't draw the curtains, and you needn't fetch me a drink. Let's sit here *silently*. I only want to read my book.

(SALLY nods, returning to her needlework. MARTHA attempts to read, but finds it too painful. She is compelled to study her companion.)

Martha: What do you embroider?

Sally: A pillow. The front panel for a pillow.

Martha: What is that in the center. . . some kind of bird?

Sally: A mockingbird. It will be a mockingbird. Though it doesn't much look like one yet, I'm afraid.

Martha: Papa's favorite bird.

Sally: Yes. I sketched this from one of his birds, actually. But I haven't done it justice.

Martha: I think you did very well. After all, a bird is a difficult subject--they are in constant motion.

Sally: Yes. But this particular one liked very much to rest on Master Jefferson, so he was easier.

Martha: Ah, that is Cicero, then.

Sally: Cicero? you'd sketch something for me.

Martha: Yes, he is especially fond of Papa. Papa lets him take food from his mouth. A great mutual trust, those two share.

Sally: Yes, he is the one. Cicero. Such a nice name.

Martha: Named after the Roman statesman.

Sally: Oh. I see.

Martha: When did you sketch him? The bird, I mean.

Sally: Oh, I don't remember. A few weeks ago, I suppose.

Martha: He will certainly make a fine ornament for your pillow. My, I've been very much in the dark. I had no idea you were an artist.

Sally: I'm not. It's only for amusement.

Martha: These dreary gray months have forced us all to find sources of amusement. This book--I've read it twice this winter.

Sally: But the new books have come. Several are for you. They are in the study.

Martha: When did they come?

Sally: Why, yesterday, I think. Shall I go fetch you one?

Martha: No, thank you. I will ask Papa for them later. I wonder he didn't tell me.

Sally: I imagine he forgot. I know he has them set aside for you. One is called--

Martha: Sally?

Sally: Yes?

Martha: I wish you'd sketch something for me.

Sally: Of course I will. What do you want me to sketch?

Martha: I'd like one of Papa riding. Could you manage that?

Sally: I'm sure I could, only. . .

Martha: What?

Sally: It would require a sitting--with Master Jefferson on his horse. And with Master Jefferson so very busy, I doubt he'd--

Martha: Nonsense! He needn't sit for you! Simply watch him ride out every day. I see you at the window whenever he rides out. I should think you'd have him memorized by now.

Sally: Oh, I can't do a sketch from the window.

Martha: Come outside, then. Sketch him as he leaves each day. I dare say within a week or two, you'll have a very agreeable rendering of him.

Sally: I would be embarrassed.

Martha: Embarrassed! For heaven's sake, why?

Sally: I could never sketch Master Jefferson leaving for his ride. When he seeks his private time. It would be an intrusion.

Martha: Sally, you forget that you would be undertaking the project for his daughter. He would not deprive me of his likeness.

Sally: I suppose not.

Martha: Besides, as you say, Papa is occupied with so many important things. Why he won't even notice you. Well! Now that we've settled that, I think I will lie down and leave you to your mockingbird. I do think you ought to tear out that last part. It looks a little crooked:

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829. her home. He did not even stop to collect her things, but had them sent. She never entered the convent school again.

Sally: It still saddens me, though it has been so long since. . . We had been friends, but then, as I came to know him well, she cooled toward me. Until she was nothing of the kind companion who led me around the city.

It was as if I were his mistress, and she, the jealous wife. She was as possessive as a wife, to be sure. Even though, for many months, I was nothing more to Master Tom than his chamber maid. I often found her in the hall as I left Master Tom's bedroom. Her eyes interrogated me. Indeed, it always seemed as if we carried on a short, brutal exchange. Her cold eyes asked, "Do you seduce him?" And, without meaning to, I answered.

I often turned to watch her rigid back pause outside his room. Her fist's light knock would draw my Master from his solitude. It was my only comfort--though she was his daughter and I was but his servant, he would not have her in his room. I was the only one allowed into his inner sanctum.

And then there came the day when I was what she suspected. What I had known I would be ever since. . . I cannot remember when I first knew it. It seems now that I always knew. But that day came, and when I left his room, flushed and confused, but happy, she was there. I no sooner closed the door than I saw her round the hall toward me. It was early. Too early for me to have been there for any other reason . . . than the reason I was there. Those eyes narrowed, and her back lengthened, so that she was even taller than usual--and more formidable. But she said nothing. Nothing save my name. "Sally," she said. Her eyes did not ask--they knew.

Sally: Within weeks, she announced her decision to become a nun. The act of a jealous lover. She was determined not only to have Master Tom's full attention, but to hurt him. And she succeeded. The night of her announcement, he did not sleep. He paced the floor and spat words at me. Passionate, hateful fragments--the kind of illogical thoughts I had not known he had. Thoughts I could not answer. His mouth contorted--changed his face into that of an . . . angry stranger. I shrank from him--the only time I was afraid in his presence. He did not touch me that night. I pretended to sleep, but listened to his unsteady breathing and the movements of those restless limbs.

Jefferson: He woke long before dawn, and took the carriage to the Panthemont. Jupiter later told me what happened--as much as he knew. He told me that Master Tom had said nothing. Not a word in the carriage, not a word to the nuns, and not a word to Martha. He walked through the gates alone and came out within moments, Martha's arm in his.

Jefferson: She must be in her room.

He led her to the carriage, and took her home. He did not even stop to collect her things, but had them sent. She never entered the convent school again.

Jefferson: I had known that was what he would do. All that night, I knew he was only waiting. And he said nothing to her of it. Not that day, and never afterward. He had said it all to me, that night. Laid his anger and fear on my breast, and then waited through the restless hours until he could reclaim his daughter. After that--after he had what he wanted, there was nothing left to say.

How I worried that day--when he went after her! Worried that she had won, that he wouldn't want me anymore--had chosen her over me. But I need not have worried. No, I only worried because I was yet a child. A girl who did not understand men, who did not yet know her lover--a man who denied himself nothing. Not even for his daughter.

Scene Seven

Jefferson's bedroom in Paris, 1789.

Jefferson: No. She did not want to be a nun. She was only prepared to become one in
Jefferson: (Collapses on bed) I am exhausted. No, Sally, don't bother with them. Just let me lie here.

Sally: You'll muss the bed.

Sally: I am glad.

Jefferson: Doesn't matter.

Sally: You cannot rest in shoes. *(Removes his shoes)* And after such a day! There.
(Drops shoes to floor)

Sally: Why, do you think?

Jefferson: It was nothing. Nothing more than an early morning drive, really. But it has made me consider some matters that I have left idle too long.

Sally: What matters?

Jefferson: Have you seen Martha this evening?

Sally: No.

Jefferson: She must be in her room.

Sally: She is probably exhausted, too.

Jefferson: I suppose she is.

Sally: Did she. . . take it well?

Jefferson: Well? Oh, my naive girl. She planned it.

Sally: Planned it?

Jefferson: Of course. She waited for me, expected me. When I entered the school, she almost looked perturbed--as if I were late and had given her worry.

Sally: She is not disappointed, then?

Jefferson: No. She did not want to be a nun. She was only prepared to become one in order to punish me. Now she is home, never to leave again. That is what she really wanted. She sleeps early tonight out of contentment, not heartbreak. Her pride won't allow her to show it, but I know she is more content than she has been in some time.

Sally: I am glad.

Jefferson: As am I. We will have no more rebellion, I think. She meant only to trifle with me.

Sally: Why, do you think?

Jefferson: What?

Sally: Has something upset her?

Jefferson: You know how sensitive Martha is.

Sally: I know she is sensitive where you are concerned.

Jefferson: She felt neglected. And she was neglected, I'm afraid.

Sally: I see. Only that I hadn't expected to leave so soon. But I will be happy to return home, of course.

Jefferson: I am first in her heart and I fear, for a time, she thought herself second in mine. But she will not need to capture my attention again. My little girl has taught me my lesson.

Sally: So it is over. Perhaps someday I will find occasion to return to Paris.

Jefferson: Yes. And I'm heartily glad of it. Tonight I will sleep soundly. And so will my little goose--who stayed awake watching me all night.

Jefferson: You are still upset.

Sally: I didn't!

Sally: A little.

Jefferson: Very well. Deny it, if you will, but come to bed. And tomorrow, I will begin plans for our homecoming.

Sally: Homecoming!

Jefferson: Yes. We are going home. I promise it. Come here. (Touches her face) You are tired, too, aren't you? Admit it.

Sally: When?

Sally: Perhaps.

Jefferson: As soon as can be arranged. This experience has brought my girls' interests to my attention. I am ashamed to say I have neglected them of late. But no more. They have been too long in Paris. If either are to secure the morals and lessons of home, they should stay no longer. I will begin plans to return at once. Poor dear, you look so sad.

Sally: I slept.

Sally: I'm not.

Jefferson: You lie! Even with your back turned to me, I could feel those eyes on me.

Jefferson: Are you very sorry to leave Paris? Will you not find comfort in returning home? Why, you will be with your mother again.

Sally: I couldn't help it. I was worried.

Sally: That is true.

Jefferson: My dear girl. I'm sorry to have worried you. Now, you're only upset because

Jefferson: Yet you are melancholy. Things will look brighter. Then you'll see the prospect of going home in a new light.

Sally: It's only that I hadn't expected to leave so soon. But I will be happy to return home, of course.

Jefferson: We will have many of the amenities of France at home, Sally. James has finished his lessons. Why, he will bring French cuisine to Monticello. You won't have the finest tailors or hairdressers in Virginia, but you do not require all of that extravagance, do you? Besides, perhaps someday I will find occasion to return to Paris.

Sally: Yes, perhaps.

Jefferson: You are still upset.

Sally: A little.

Jefferson: Nothing will change, Sally.

Sally: Are you sure?

Jefferson: My silly girl. Am I sure? I promise it. Come here. (*Touches her face*) You are tired, too, aren't you? Admit it.

Sally: Perhaps.

Jefferson: Because you did not sleep. Come. Tell the truth. You watched me through the night like a hawk, didn't you?

Sally: I slept.

Jefferson: You lie. Even with your back turned to me, I could feel those eyes on me.

Aware of every move I made.

Sally: I couldn't help it. I was worried.

Jefferson: My dear girl. I'm sorry to have worried you. Now, you're only upset because you're tired. In the morning everything will look brighter. Then you'll see the prospect of going home in a new light.

Sally: I'm sure you're right. *Master Wayles' woman almost all of her life. And he was my father. But I never thought of him as my father, nor did he think of me as his child--to Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.*

Sally: But in the morning light the matter seemed worse--less likely to end well. James was agitated as soon as he learned of Master Tom's plan to return to Virginia. Poor boy! So brave and anxious to assert himself, and yet his face still asked permission. He couldn't help it. It had been bred into him. Into both of us. A confusing time for me, when James urged me to make my decision--the decision I'd put off so long. I promised I would decide quickly. And I did, though I suppose my choice was already made. That too, having been bred into me. Into all weaker men and women--disposed to choose what they already know. No matter what it is.

I told myself that he had promised that things would not change. That justified it, as that was all I really wanted--to keep things as they had been those last months. Goose that I was, I thought, "he has not abandoned me to please Martha. That is something." Yes, it was. Something for him. Didn't think that way then, though. Too young to know it was always for him. And I don't resent it, even now. Now that he's gone, and I'm left with . . . I don't resent it. I accepted his ways long ago. After the babies and the loss and ugly gossip, I grew up, and knew him as a woman knows a man--accepted that it would always be for him.

Sally: That was when I discovered I was enceinte. In those months before we left. My first pregnancy. So strange to me. I had been a girl when I came to Paris. In so short a time I had become a woman, and then a mother. I felt as if I had lived years from the moment I had arrived in Paris, from the moment I saw Master Tom at the carriage door. I was nothing of the Sally Hemings who sailed from Virginia, only two years before.

Sally: For weeks, I said nothing of it to him. I feared what he would say. I wanted him to smile a great smile, his eyelids crinkled at the corners, and lift me in his arms. To call me "little mother" as I had heard him call Mistress Jefferson all those years ago. But I worried that it could not be, and so I waited.

He smiled when I told him, but it was not the smile I'd wanted. He looked uncomfortable--as if he did not know whether to laugh. Or was trying to keep from laughing. . . at me. I wished I hadn't told him. Wished that it weren't so. And then he kissed my forehead like a . . . doting father. A tenderness, yes, but the tenderness of one who had nothing to do with the pregnancy. Nothing of a lover.

How could I have forgotten how it was with slave owners and their slave children? Why did I expect. . . something *more*? I knew what it was to be the master's

woman. My mother had been Master Wayles' woman almost all of her life. And he was my father. But I never thought of him as my father, nor did he think of me as his child--to him, I was my mother's child. Why did I think things would be different for Master Tom and me? No, I cannot answer it. And I cannot be excused.

I suppose James was right. In Paris, I had forgotten the way things were for slave mistresses. . . . Had allowed myself to believe that this was a courtship--even a marriage. But when it was decided that we were to return home, I remembered myself. At last. Remembered that I was no wife. And that Master Tom would be no father. Remembered this would be *my* child. And I began to wonder, would it not be better, then, to have my child born free?

Sally: Oh, James his awful temper! Poor Monsieur Perrault. It's a wonder he will still teach me.

Scene Eight

Jefferson's bedroom in Paris, 1789. If of your company, he says. . . but will, let me read it to you exactly. 'Tear myself from the sickbed for the pleasure of my lessons with

Sally: (*Entering*) You wanted to see me, Master Jefferson?

Jefferson: Yes, Sally. I was just writing some letters--arranging for our departure. Well! You look. . . quite lovely today. That is a pretty dress.

Jefferson: And he says that your accent is very fine. As fine as Martha's. Which is, to be
Sally: Thank you, Sir. It was very kind of you to buy the fabric for me.

Jefferson: Nonsense. I knew the color would suit you. And your hair complements the dress quite well. Charles has outdone himself today. You shall miss him, won't you?

Jefferson: But it is. Perrault says so. Yes, the dress, the hair, a French tutor that would

Sally: Yes, but I shall manage without him. Though it will take practice. I'm afraid I've forgotten how to even braid it! that you have suited Paris.

Jefferson: And your French lessons with Perrault. You will miss those, won't you? my lessons and fine clothes.

Sally: I will. But I will have my books. I can still study.

Jefferson: There will be other sacrifices in Virginia. We will bring much of Paris back with

Jefferson: Good girl. Perrault tells me he is quite disappointed to see you leave. You have made a fine pupil. James on the other hand. . . but it must be discussed. Now, How to start? That is the difficulty. Your brother has become a fine chef here in Paris.

Sally: James is cruel to poor Perrault.

Jefferson: So I've heard. In fact, there has been an altercation. I've just had a note from Perrault--he refuses to see James again.

Sally: What happened?

Jefferson: I'm afraid James became incensed with him, and beat him about the face. Tore his coat. Perrault demands that he be compensated for the coat. I cannot blame him, and will send the amount at once. He fancies himself quite ill now. He has sent me notice, until our departure, he will only instruct *Mademoiselle* Hemings.

Sally: Oh, James his awful temper! Poor Monsieur Perrault. It's a wonder he will still teach me.

Jefferson: He will not deprive himself of your company, he says. . . but will, let me read it to you exactly, "tear myself from the sickbed for the pleasure of my lessons with *Mademoiselle* Hemings." It seems you are an ideal pupil.

Sally: I have tried to be. I am glad Perrault thinks I am.

Jefferson: And he says that your accent is very fine. As fine as Martha's. Which is, to be sure, better than mine.

Sally: I'm sure it is not.

Jefferson: But it is. Perrault says so. Yes, the dress, the hair, a French tutor that would abandon his "sickbed" for the pleasure of your company and fine accent. . . It seems that Paris has suited you. Or rather that you have suited Paris.

Sally: Oh, yes. I have been very happy here. And I can never thank you enough for my lessons and fine clothes.

Jefferson: There will be other fineries in Virginia. We will bring much of Paris back with us, you know. Perhaps the best parts. But Sally, I asked you here for a reason. I have something to discuss with you. It is. . . unpleasant, but it must be discussed. Now. How to start? That is the difficulty. Your brother has become a fine chef here in Paris.

Sally: Yes. I know he appreciates the opportunity you have given him, Master Jefferson. Just as I appreciate all you have done for me.

Jefferson: He has been given the chance to learn a great skill. I have taken great pains for his future at Monticello. I want James to bring French cuisine to our home in Virginia. But it seems James has other plans for his skills.

Sally: He has spoken with you about his wishes?

Jefferson: He has.

Sally: Oh dear. What?

Jefferson: Your brother has forgotten that I endeavored to give him his skills so that he might better serve the family. Not so he might remain here to serve his own needs.

Sally: I know, Sir. I am very sorry.

Jefferson: How long have you known of this?

Sally: For months.

Jefferson: And why did you not come to me?

Sally: I had hoped that he would change his mind. I should have realized that he was too determined.

Jefferson: Then you understand the risks of his staying here.

Sally: I do.

Jefferson: And you agree that he would find himself safer and more agreeably situated in Virginia, among the family?

Sally: But if it is what James wants--

Jefferson: James is like a child who longs for freedom not understanding what it would mean for him.

Sally: Should he not learn then?

Jefferson: Would you have him learn at the price of his life?

Sally: Of course not.

Jefferson: There is more.

Sally: Gracious! What?

Jefferson: Perhaps it is not true. Perhaps he fabricated it to hurt me. I hope that is the case.

Sally: What has he said? Master Tom, please tell me!

Jefferson: Master Tom! You are become quite informal with me, aren't you Sally?

Sally: I'm sorry, Sir. I didn't mean--

Jefferson: No, do not apologize. It cheers me somewhat. It is balm to my wounded pride, I confess. Shows an attachment that is pleasing.

Sally: I am quite attached to you, Sir. You know that.

Jefferson: Yes, I thought so. I thought I knew your feelings. But then James came to me. . . . And now I am no longer sure of them. Will you tell me truly, Sally?

Sally: Of course, Sir.

Jefferson: Very well. Your brother proclaimed that you too wished to remain in Paris. Is this true, Sally? Have you, as James said, planned this abandonment for months?

Sally: James has tried to convince me to remain with him. But I have not been able to decide.

Jefferson: Yes. He told me of your arrangement with Robert. He regarded it as a final insult to me, that your only sacrifice in remaining in Paris would be in losing Robert. There, you need not look so ashamed. Only tell me if

Sally: I am so very confused.

Jefferson: My darling girl! bear this, Master Jefferson. James should not have spoken so.

Sally: I am tempted to stay in Paris--to take care of James, but it would be a sacrifice. I cannot think of leaving you.

Sally: James. James should not have--

Jefferson: Why did you not come to me?

Jefferson: His temper and indiscretion are beside the point. I only ask. . . is this true? Do

Sally: I wanted to tell you so many times. But I could not betray James.

Jefferson: I understand. You are loyal to him. And he has abused that loyalty--used you terribly. I suppose he has tried to convince you all these months.

Jefferson: And when did you decide this?

Sally: He has talked of nothing else. But don't be angry with him!

Sally: When I first arrived here.

Jefferson: My girl, I cannot help but be angry with him. But he'll not be punished. I know the desire for freedom. But James has gone about it in an unforgivable manner. He has shown himself too much a child to claim it.

Sally: I hadn't been here long. . . before I forgot Robert. And when I remembered him

Sally: But--I realized that I could not marry him. It is not right that a woman should forget the man she is to marry.

Jefferson: You must trust me, Sally, I am familiar with the world. James would do better to remain with me. And you would be dreadfully unhappy here. Why, you could not see your mother! You would become a stranger to the rest of your family! No, I won't have it. I won't have you where I cannot protect you.

Sally: Yes, Sir. what made you forget him?

Jefferson: Besides, none of this was your plan. There is no reason for you to suffer for it. And what of Robert?

Sally: Oh, no! James didn't! cry. It is all settled.

Jefferson: Yes. He told me of your arrangement with Robert. Revealed it as a final insult to me--declaring that you had little feeling for me; that your only sacrifice in remaining in Paris would be in losing Robert. There, you need not look so ashamed. Only tell me if this is true.

Sally: What about James? Someone must take care of him.

Sally: (*Tearfully*) I cannot bear this, Master Jefferson. James should not have spoken so.

Jefferson: You will still care for James. As Monsieur.

Jefferson: There, now. Don't cry. And it is Master Tom, remember? It was decided.

Sally: But he is determined.

Sally: James. James should not have--

Jefferson: As am I.

Jefferson: His temper and indiscretion are beside the point. I only ask. . . is this true? Do you have an arrangement with Robert?

Sally: I did. But I decided long ago. . . to break it. . . here--with his sister near! Without our care, I fear he will be utterly lost.

Jefferson: And when did you decide this?

Sally: But if I stayed with him, perhaps--

Sally: When I first arrived here.

Jefferson: No, dearest, you cannot stay. Why, what of the baby you carry? Has James

Jefferson: That long ago? mean for you to dump the child in a box--to send it to the Hôpital de Enfant-Trouvés to be one of thousands of abandoned illegitimate children?

Sally: I hadn't been here long. . . before I forgot Robert. And when I remembered him again, I realized that I could not marry him. It is not right that a woman should forget the man she is to marry.

Jefferson: No, but I'm certain he has not planned for the child.

Jefferson: No. It is not. (*Hands her handkerchief*) Dry your eyes.

Sally: He said we would raise the child here. Together.

Sally: Thank you.

Jefferson: Hardly a reasonable plan--two children raising a child.

Jefferson: And what made you forget him?

Sally: I am no child.

Sally: So many things. I am so ashamed.

Jefferson: No, you're not. But James is, and you know it.

Jefferson: Now, now. Don't cry. It is all settled.

Sally: What is settled?

Jefferson: You will return to Virginia with me. There is no reason for you to remain here.

Sally: What about James? Someone must take care of him.

Jefferson: You will still care for James. At Monticello.

Sally: But he is determined.

Jefferson: As am I.

Sally: You think it is better. . . for James to return home? You think he will be safer?

Jefferson: I do. Think of all the trouble he has caused here--with his sister near! Without our care, I fear he will be utterly lost.

Sally: But if I stayed with him, perhaps--

Jefferson: No, dearest, you cannot stay. Why, what of the baby you carry? Has James planned for that? Does he mean for you to dump the child in a box--to send it to the Hôpital de Enfant-Trouvés to be one of thousands of abandoned illegitimate children?

Sally: James would never ask such a thing!

Jefferson: No, but I'm certain he has not planned for the child.

Sally: He said we would raise the child here. Together.

Jefferson: Hardly a reasonable plan--two children raising a child.

Sally: I am no child.

Jefferson: No, you're not. But James is, and you know it.

Sally: Yes. That is how I know he'll never be persuaded to return home. He will insist upon staying. And so I must stay, too. It is as you said--without his family, he will be lost. I suppose I lied when I said James was the only reason. That is the other, perhaps larger reason.

Jefferson: Good Lord, but he has made a mess of things! I could not have predicted this. But then, perhaps I should have done as you have after all . . . studied my servants rather than plants. I thought you were content with me.

Sally: You do?

Sally: I am content, Master. More than content--I am happiest when I am with you. I find the thought of leaving you unbearable. But I cannot abandon my brother. He is what you said. He is a child. If I leave him, I fear that he will. . . drink himself to death.

Jefferson: That he would. Tom!

Sally: Then you understand?

Jefferson: Yes. But that is beside the point. He will return with us. I will persuade him.

Sally: You cannot.

Jefferson: I can, and will. And when I have, you will be content to return to Monticello with me?

Sally: I am confused. Do I have your blessing to remain here?

Sally: Yes, only. . .

Jefferson: No, Sally. You will return home with me. It is best for everyone. You will

Jefferson: What? You need not worry about a thing. I will arrange it.

Sally: My child.

Jefferson: I don't understand. He will be persuaded to return to Virginia.

Sally: If my child is born here, he will be free.

Jefferson: (*Amused*) You have decided it is to be a boy, then?

Sally: Please, don't laugh.

Jefferson: I'm sorry.

Sally: I suppose I lied when I said James was the only reason. That is the other, perhaps larger reason.

Sally: *(Solemnly)* Nothing, nothing. I.

Jefferson: It is a reason I well understand.

Jefferson: And my little mother will sleep now. *(Takes her hand)* Those dark circles

Sally: You do?

Jefferson: Of course. I understand a parent's nature. I would stand for nothing less for my child.

Jefferson: Come here, Sally. *(Kisses her)* That's my girl. You need never worry about a

Sally: Thank you, Master Tom!

Jefferson: Very well. I am glad we had this talk--glad that I understand you. You may leave now. Lie down for a nap, if you like. The excitement of the morning must have tired you. Keep the handkerchief. I will return to my letters.

Sally: And he did, in his way. It was not long before we began our journey down

Sally: But Sir, I--

Jefferson: What, Sally?

Sally: I am confused. Do I have your blessing to remain here?

The weather did not comply with our departure--as it even the elements used to

Jefferson: No, Sally. You will return home with me. It is best for everyone. You will see that in time. You need not worry about a thing. I will arrange it.

limbs. No one mentioned my condition--though they all stole furtive glances at my

Sally: But how?

Master Tom gave the girls his full attention, supervising their reading, and even

Jefferson: I will talk to James. He will be persuaded to return to Virginia.

together--so much my family. One day I received the news of them--Master Tom so tall

Sally: And the baby?

intelligence, the other, frail and beautiful--the eldest of her mother. On our last night in

Jefferson: It will be free. At the age of twenty-one. And so will any others we might

have.

only drawn by the hand of his mistress. He kept it always pressed between the pages

of a book, and I often saw him take the book from its shelf and open it to the loose page

Sally: *(To herself)* We might have.

Jefferson: Pardon?

Sally: *(Solemnly)* Nothing, nothing. I . . . thank you.

Jefferson: And my little mother will sleep now, I hope? She will lose those dark circles beneath her eyes?

Sally: I shall try.

Jefferson: Come here, Sally. *(Kisses her)* That's my girl. You must never worry about a thing, but come to me honestly with your troubles. Trust in me. I will always care for you.

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: And he did, in his way. It was not long before we began our journey from Paris--where revolution swarmed the streets, and I had briefly thought myself something more than I could ever be. And we returned to Monticello, where I was perhaps less than I could have been. . . but that does not matter now. *(Pause)* And though Master Tom promised we would return to Paris, I always knew it would not be--that I would never again leave his mountain.

The weather did not comply with our departure--as if even the elements tried to keep me there. We were trapped at Le Havre for two weeks. Martha and Maria occupied themselves with reading, while I sketched to keep my mind from my aching stomach and limbs. No one mentioned my condition--though they all stole furtive glances at my growing waistline.

Master Tom gave the girls his full attention, supervising their reading, and even helping little Maria with the more difficult words. I loved to watch them laugh and talk together--so much my family. One day I sketched the three of them--Master Tom so tall and strong, flanked by his two daughters--one also tall, bearing his seriousness and intelligence, the other, frail and beautiful--the picture of her mother. On our last night in Le Havre, I gave him the sketch as a present. He stared at it for some time--the image of his family drawn by the hand of his mistress. He kept it always pressed between the pages of a book, and I often saw him take that book from its shelf and open it to the loose page

that was. . . his family. I looked for the sketch before I left Monticello, but it was not there. Perhaps he burned it, just as he burned Mistress Jefferson's letters after she died. Because he refused to share.

I liked to draw. It allowed me to pretend that I did not notice the staring. The ogling of my waistline--the ship's crew, smirking and amused. And Martha, resentful and appalled. But then, there was Maria--so different from her sister. Sweet, loyal girl. Though she must have noticed the baby I carried, her affections were unchanged. As if it were not so. Or as if she. . . didn't mind. She still grasped my hand with her small, pale one in moments of laughter. Still kissed my cheek each night before going to bed. I do not know what she thought or felt--we never spoke of it. I only know that when she said my name, it was a word of joy.

She needed me just as I needed her. I remember she came to me one night in Le Havre. She could not sleep, and had sneaked from her room where Martha slept soundly. How we laughed at her accomplishment! Then she threw her tiny frame on my bed, and said, 'Now, let's pretend we do not leave Paris at all, but are on our ship sailing there. What if it were all a dream and we haven't even arrived there yet?' We laughed and settled into talk, until the sky grew light, just as we had on our sea journey to Paris. She confessed she was afraid to return to Virginia. . . she did not know what to expect, having been gone so long. Her voice became low and throaty--the way it always did when she was about to cry. I wrapped my arms around her, and turned the talk to other things. I don't remember what. The senseless things girls talk of late at night. At dawn, we drifted to sleep. When I woke, I found her next to me, her face buried in my neck, her tiny freckled hand resting on my stomach, cupping the space filled by my child, and her half-sibling.

Sally: They are much happier when you are home. Scene Nine

Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello, 1789. SALLY is in an advanced state of pregnancy. Fatigued from the journey, she unpacks Jefferson's things with great slowness. JEFFERSON removes his coat and vest.

Jefferson: Ah, but it is good to be home.

Sally: I think I'd better press these. I'll do that tomorrow.

Sally: More building?

Jefferson: What did you make of our homecoming?

Sally: And these! I don't know why we brought them. *I don't think ahead, there will be nowhere to house my grandchildren. (Sally breathes heavily, quakes herself and sits on*

Jefferson: Do you ignore me? *Are you all right?*

Sally: They are so worn! I should have burned them.

Jefferson: Sally! *or girl. Sit down here. (She does so. The picture was hard on you, wasn't it?*

Sally: What?

Sally: A bit tiring, but I am glad to be home.

Jefferson: I asked you what you made of our homecoming.

Jefferson: Are you? ... to have been home?

Sally: I'm sorry. I was absorbed with these britches. Why ever have you kept them?

Sally: Of course I am. ... They are not ...

Jefferson: They are comfortable. Come now, tell me.

Jefferson: You do not wish you had stayed in Paris?

Sally: What?

Sally: No. ... I would not ...

Jefferson: What you made of our--oh! Never mind!

Jefferson: You are content here with me?

Sally: Today's homecoming? It was overwhelming.

Sally: You know I am always content with you.

Jefferson: Yes, but wasn't it extraordinary and unexpected? The tears, laughter and embraces. It is good to be among my people again.

Sally: They are much happier when you are here.

Jefferson: As am I. I cannot believe I was content to be away so long. *I had expected. But then, that is how you looked when you arrived in Paris.*

Sally: Come, now. There were distractions.

Sally: I wasn't frightened. It was only that there were so many people--all smiling and

Jefferson: Yes. Too many, I think. They kept me from my other duties. There is much to be done. Things seem to have been at a standstill here. We must begin at once.

Jefferson: My girl does not adapt well to change. But what can you expect. Just as you

Sally: More building?

You are frightened.

Jefferson: The house is only half completed. Why, if we don't thrust ahead, there will be nowhere to house my grandchildren. *(Sally breathes heavily, steadies herself and sits on the corner of the bed.)* Sally! Are you all right?

Sally: It's nothing. I just felt dizzy for a moment.

Jefferson: My poor girl. Sit down here. *(She does so)* This journey was hard on you, wasn't it?

Sally: *Only talked for a few moments. But I will see her tomorrow. When we are more*
Sally: A bit tiring, but I am glad to be home.

Jefferson: Are you *glad to have James home?*

Sally: Of course I am. *Yes. That he was persuaded to return. Just as I was.*

Jefferson: You do not wish you had stayed in Paris?

Sally: No. *but I wasn't sure he'd--*

Jefferson: You are content here with me? *Is he coming?*

Sally: You know I am always content with you. *is only temporary--that when he has trained another chief, he may return to France.*

Jefferson: You did not seem so content this afternoon.

Jefferson: *That is the agreement. And a fine one, I think. Perhaps your mother can talk*

Sally: What do you mean?

Jefferson: In the carriage. When the crowds gathered around us. You looked frightened. But then, that is how you looked when you arrived in Paris. *(ish crate)*

Sally: I wasn't frightened. It was only that there were so many people--all yelling and running at the carriage.

Sally: *I am fine.*

Jefferson: My girl does not adapt well to change. But in time you'll adjust. Just as you did in Paris. *Give that to me. (Takes it from her) Why don't you finish this tomorrow?*

You are exhausted.

Sally: It was just too much excitement, I suppose.

Jefferson: Poor dear. Have you seen your mother?

Sally: Yes. I finally found her in the crowd.

Jefferson: And? you seen Robert?

Sally: Only talked for a few moments. But I will see her tomorrow. When we are more settled.

Jefferson: Sally.

Jefferson: Is she pleased to have James home?

Sally: No, I haven't.

Sally: Surprised, I think. That he was persuaded to return. Just as I was.

Jefferson: Will you see him tomorrow?

Jefferson: I told you I would manage it, didn't I?

Sally: I'm sure I will. And I will tell him.

Sally: Yes, but I wasn't sure he'd--

Jefferson: Yes, you must. It is only right.

Jefferson: And how does he take his homecoming?

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: He is still in low spirits. But he knows it is only temporary--that when he has trained another chef, he may return to France.

Jefferson: That is the agreement. And a fine one, I think. Perhaps your mother can talk

some sense into him. hand. That's all he ever wanted--to make some woman a good

husband. And he did. After Master Tom sold him to Mr. Perry, he married a woman,

Sally: I doubt it. She's been talking sense all his life and it has never taken. Poor James.

Now, *(Standing)* where are your new books? *(Lifts a smallish crate)*

Sometimes I wonder if Mama wasn't right--if I shouldn't have been happier with

Jefferson: Sally, don't! have been none of the waiting--that constant waiting for an hour or

two with the man I loved. It seems that that is all I've done with this life. Wait atop his

Sally: I am fine. to come home. And when he was home, wait for him to have the time

for me. When he had done his duty, and acquired enough of the solitude he so needed.

Jefferson: Give that to me. *(Takes it from her)* Why don't you finish this tomorrow?

You are exhausted. Or Martha. I suspect that's where Martha and I were not so

Sally: I want you settled tonight.

Jefferson: That's impossible.

Sally: We'll see. Now, all of your papers--

Jefferson: Have you seen Robert?

Sally: I know we had them carried up. (*Finding them*) Here they are!

Jefferson: Sally.

Sally: No, I haven't.

Jefferson: Will you see him tomorrow?

Sally: I'm sure I will. And I will tell him.

Jefferson: Yes, you must. It is only right.

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: Mama was ashamed of me. Told me so often enough. How shameful it was that I would treat a good, loyal man that way. A man who could have taken care of me. The kind of husband Mama would have liked to have had. . . She was right. He would have made me a good husband. That's all he ever wanted--to make some woman a good husband. And he did. After Master Tom sold him to Mr. Perry, he married a woman, Ursula, and had lots of children by her. All healthy. It was for the best, then. Robert got what he wanted--a wife, a family. The things I couldn't give him.

(*ROBERT*) Sometimes I wonder if Mama wasn't right--if I wouldn't have been happier with Robert. There would have been none of the waiting--that constant waiting for an hour or two with the man I loved. It seems that that is all I've done with this life. Wait atop his mountain for him to come home. And when he was home, wait for him to have the time for me. When he had done his duty, and enjoyed enough of the solitude he so needed. And no matter how much time he gave me, no matter how giving of himself he was, it was never enough for me. Or Martha. I suppose that's where Martha and I were not so

different. The two of us just sat around like old crows--waiting to devour whatever leftover scraps of time were left. Always hungry.

Robert: I saw James. He's dressed like a different person.

Scene Ten

Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello, 1789--only days after the return voyage. SALLY treats each object with great care and familiarity. Large with child, she occasionally caresses her stomach. ROBERT watches from the doorway, unobserved by SALLY for several seconds. He is a large, dark-skinned man, around twenty-four years of age.

Sally: Robert! You startled me!

Robert: Seems like everyone has seen you but me.

Sally: You shouldn't be in the master's bedroom.

Robert: I know. But you've been back for days, and I haven't seen you.

Sally: I'm sorry. I've been so busy getting things in order. There's so much to be done! And I'm tired from the journey.

Robert: That's what your mama said. She said you were tired. I tried to wait, but then I got tired of waiting. Had to see you for myself.

Sally: It is good to see you.

Robert: Your mama said you'd changed, but she didn't prepare me for this. You look like a different person! Those clothes, your hair.

(ROBERT looks at her waistline. SALLY unconsciously follows his gaze, glancing down at her stomach. Uncomfortable, she blunders on with the conversation.)

Sally: You act as though you don't recognize me.

Robert: I hardly do. When you left you still looked like a child, a girl. Now you. . . look like a lady. Standing in the master's room, you look like the mistress of Monticello.

Sally: We all had to become quite fashionable in Paris. Even James! Why you wouldn't believe how much he's changed. He looks like a gentleman.

Robert: I saw James. He's dressed different, but he's the same James. But you--you look like a different person.

Sally: I'm not.

Robert: I hear you learned French. I hear Master Jefferson hired a tutor for you.

Sally: Yes. Well, really for my brother. It was part of his training. But then I was allowed to learn too. He was a fine tutor. James' French is much better than his English now. I'm afraid he'll be even more out of place here than he was.

Robert: You'll feel out of place here, too. Won't you?

Sally: I could never be awkward here. This is my home.

Robert: I heard about other things besides the tutor.

Sally: You did? My, no one must have done any work for all this talk!

Robert: Always time for talk. You remember that.

Sally: I remember.

Robert: I hear you had your hair dressed by the same man who dressed Miss Martha and Miss Maria's hair. That true too?

Sally: It's true. But it's of no consequence. As I said, we all had to look fashionable. All the servants had their hair dressed.

Robert: Not by the master's man.

Sally: It was a matter of practicality. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must get these things sorted before Master To--Jefferson comes back.

Robert: Mhm. *(Pause)* As you can see, nothing has changed with me. Not since you left. I've just been waiting. For you.

Robert: Why did you come back here, Sally? I know it wasn't for me! I know it wasn't!

Sally: *(Rushes to the window)* The master's back from riding. You'd better leave. You shouldn't be in his room.

Robert: He won't come up here yet. Unless you know something that I don't.

Sally: I can't talk with you. Not now, not here.

Sally: He may come up, Robert. And you shouldn't be here if he does.

Robert: Tell me why you came back. Why did you come back here? To give birth to

Robert: There a reason he'd come up to his room right away? To see you, maybe?

Sally: I can't talk with you. Not now, not here.

Sally: We'll talk later.

Robert: No we won't. I see that clear as day.

Robert: No we won't. I see that clear as day.

Sally: What do you mean?

Sally: What do you mean?

Robert: You think I'm blind? You think I haven't noticed that baby you're carrying?

Robert: You think I'm blind? You think I haven't noticed that baby you're carrying?

Sally: Please!

Sally: Please!

Robert: Why, Sally?

Robert: Why, Sally?

Sally: Robert, I--

Sally: Robert, I--

Robert: Why are you carrying the master's baby? I thought we understood each other.

Robert: Why are you carrying the master's baby? I thought we understood each other. All this time I've been waiting for you to come back, thinking that when you did I'd make you my wife. Now you've come back and I see you're the master's woman. Carrying his baby, folding his things, guarding his bedroom like you're his wife.

Sally: I made my choice in Paris. I made a promise, and the master made promises too.

Sally: Please leave.

Robert: But why? Why did you make that choice when you had someone waiting for

Robert: Damn it, Sally! Stop telling me to leave. This isn't your house, and you're not the master's wife. Don't you know that?

Sally: It's not important anymore, is it?

Sally: Of course I know that.

Robert: Why did you come back here, Sally? I know it wasn't for me! I know it wasn't to be my wife, like we planned. Otherwise you wouldn't be hiding from me all these days. Otherwise you wouldn't be looking at me like I'm some kind of animal, not fit to be in the master's room.

Sally: I can't talk with you. Not now, not in his room.

Robert: Tell me why you came back. Why did you come back here? To give birth to another slave for him? To be his whore?

Sally: Don't you talk to me that way!

Robert: Did you even think of me? Of the family we wanted to have?

Sally: Of course I did. I thought of you! But then I grew up. I realized it wasn't ever going to happen. Yes, I'm pregnant with the master's baby. I'm his property. I can't have a husband. I can't be a wife. He is my life now.

Robert: Don't you think I know all that? Don't you think I've heard the gossip about you and Master Jefferson? What I want to know is *why* you did it. Why did you make him your life? *Why didn't you stay in Paris where you were free?* I could have come to you somehow. I would have found a way. I loved you Sally! You could have been my wife. Now you're just the master's whore.

Sally: Don't call me that. Don't ever call me that again.

Robert: I know. It's an ugly word isn't it? Sally, that life is just as ugly.

Sally: I made my choice in Paris. I made a promise, and the master made promises too.

Robert: But *why*? Why did you make that choice when you had someone waiting for you.

Sally: It's not important anymore, is it?

Robert: It's still important to me. I'm the one that's been waiting. Planning. Only to see the woman I wanted to marry carrying some other man's child.

Sally: I didn't mean to--

Robert: Oh, but I was a fool! I heard the talk, but I didn't believe it. Couldn't. Not my Sally, I said. Course, I guess I didn't know my Sally, now did I? No, Sir. Then *he* told me it was true, but I still wouldn't believe it. . .

Sally: What are you talking about?

Robert: Master Jefferson told me you were. . . Broke things to me. Thought I deserved that. Apparently you didn't. And course, he doesn't want me here to complicate things, so he's sending me away.

Sally: Away?

Robert: Don't tell me you didn't know that! Giving me to Mr. Perry. To pay for the wood joining that he did on the house.

Sally: When did he--

Robert: Day after you got back, he called me in. Told me I was going with Perry. Being the fool I am, I told him I couldn't leave without you. . . . That you were. . . . That we were. . . . He told me you were changed--so changed that I wouldn't recognize you. That you didn't plan to marry me anymore.

Sally: I am sorry, Robert.

Robert: I don't want your apologies! I only want to know what he promised you that made you do this. But you're not going to tell me, are you? Must have been something special, all right.

Sally: You'd better leave now. He'll be angry if he sees you here.

Robert: Talking to his property.

Sally: Yes. That's what I am. And you needn't act so above it, because it's what you are, too. Or you couldn't be sent away when he pleases.

Robert: But I don't choose that. If I had my way out, why I'd be smart enough to take it. You. . . you walked right back into the trap.

Sally: Stop it.

Robert: I'll never understand it. Never will. What he could have offered that would make you throw away our plans. Make you throw away your freedom, and the freedom of that baby. Seems to me nothing would be worth that.

Sally: Don't question my decision. I've made my choice, and I made it with my child in mind. Don't you ever think I didn't!

Robert: Maybe you love him. Is that it? No, I can't believe that.

Sally: He's coming! If he sees you in his room. . . talking to me like this. . . he'll be angry.

Robert: Oh, I know. I know how protective he is of his property.

Sally: That's right. I am his property. *His!*

Robert: *(Pause)* Yes, you are, God help you. You're his, and I don't even recognize you.

Entrance hall at Monticello, 1829.

Sally: And I had changed. Not just my hair and clothes, but. . . whoever Sally Hemings was when she left for Paris, well, she was all too different when she came home. Mama noticed it. Said I put on airs all of a sudden--that I didn't talk like a house servant. She raised her eyebrows and scowled when I spoke a word or two in French. She told me that all the other servants were talking about me. And laughing. Oh, that shamed me! That was what she meant to do. Shame me into the person I was before.

But I had also grown too proud in Paris, and it wasn't easy to put myself back in the place of a common servant. For a time, I tried to talk and behave as the other house

servants did. It must have been an awkward performance. I had changed, and no matter how I tried, I couldn't change back. And of course, I did not really want to change. I feared. . . I feared that Master Tom would not want the person that I was before--an ignorant servant girl. I knew he wanted me as I had been in Paris, and if I changed, would I not lose him? And so, I let the servants laugh and talk behind my back. I told myself that it didn't matter. I would not sacrifice Master Tom's attention for. . . any other companionship.

But it was lonely. I no longer had Martha's affection. And though I still had Maria's, there was all too little time with her at home. She was soon immersed in a courtship with John Wayles Eppes. I tried to busy myself, but the days crawled by as I grew larger and heavier. . . waiting to give birth. Those were hot, slow days. I wandered around that house--all broken and shaking with the pounding of hammers. There seemed to be laughter everywhere--that always silenced when I came near.

They were days ripe with secrets--secrets kept from me, and secrets I was forced to keep. Far too many secrets for a happy home. And I did not have Master Tom to comfort me. Not long after we arrived, he was appointed Secretary of State. And again, duty took him from Martha and me. But he could not stand to be from his family long, and so he came home often.

He was home that morning--when those leaden days ended, and our son was born. He was not born free or enslaved. He was born dead. In my mind, I named him Thomas, though I never saw him. Never saw if he looked like. . . Master Tom. I closed my eyes that morning, and kept them closed for a long time. And when I opened them. . . my baby was gone. Mama had wrapped him up in the blanket we had made. Taken him away. All I ever saw of him was that little box that held him. . . lowered into the ground. But I did not cry, and I was not shocked. Somehow, I had known all along that I carried something as heavy and unmoving as those hot days of summer.

And I did not cry when Mama said those cruel things only weeks after he died. When she said it was the journey home that killed him. That I was too large to travel. . . that I should have stayed in Paris, where my baby and I were safe and free. Said if I wasn't going to marry Robert, there was no need for me to return. All the thoughts she'd kept silent that slow summer. All the questions I'd been asking myself ever since I shut my eyes that morning. The questions that I couldn't answer, except to say, "I didn't know. I loved him, and I didn't know."

Master Tom was good to me. His was. . . the first face I saw when I opened my eyes again that morning. And I felt his hand cover mine. I wanted him to lie down with me. . . to hold me against him. But Mama stood behind me looking so stern--ashamed of

me and the joy I took from that man's face. I couldn't help that it was the only sight that comforted me. The only sight that seemed to say, "there will be others." And so I closed my eyes again and tried to see them. Little Thomases on the mountain.

My lost baby was soon forgotten by everyone but Mama and me. Master Tom put it out of his mind, just as he did with any unpleasantness. He concentrated on happier things--Martha's wedding. Yes, that house was turned upside down--even more than usual--in preparation for Martha's marriage to Thomas Mann Randolph. No one was happier than Master Tom, for Randolph was family.

Poor Randolph. A weak man who thought too little of himself. Too weak, I think, for such a marriage. He always knew that Martha loved her father more. And that he could never compete with Master Tom. He was so silent and restless at dinner. And never spoke until he drank. Worst of all, he drank as James did--to make himself bold, or perhaps change himself completely. Poor man! As out of place . . . as I. Waiting, always waiting for his wife to notice him . . . and she always waiting for Master Tom to notice her. And, of course, I waited too. Sometimes I think, what fools we were, Randolph and I! Both of us waiting for those two . . . who would have been just as content had we not been there. And we two--would we not have been more content elsewhere?

I remember once, in a fit of jealousy, Randolph called himself a "silly bird." Said he would never feel at ease among the swans. I looked at him, leaving the room with his red and downcast child's face, and thought, "why, he is like me." He was, perhaps, the only one who could have understood my life.

James: We were not swans, Randolph and I, nor could we ever be. But once we'd known those graceful ones, we were ruined.

Sally: Heard what?

Scene Eleven

James: Hm! Isn't this interesting. I know something about you.

The entrance hall of Monticello, 1791. SALLY paces the room restlessly. She goes to the outer door, opens it, and looks out.

Sally: What?

James: (From offstage) Sally! (JAMES enters through the outer door. SALLY seems irritated with his presence) You waiting for somebody?

what it's worth to you.

Sally: What were you doing out there?

Sally: Don't be silly. I'm not waiting for anyone.

James: A man can still go outside, can't he? Or do I need your permission for that?

James: All right. I won't.

Sally: Don't be ridiculous. I thought you were in the kitchen. *(Sally is in SALLY'S apparent agitation.)*

James: I was talking to Jupiter.

James: Bothers you, doesn't it?

Sally: Oh. Well, what do you want with me?

Sally: Not at all. Whatever it is, I'm sure it's not important.

James: Isn't this a nice reception! I saw you standing at the door, and I thought I'd come talk to you. Anything wrong with that?

No? Well, I suppose I should be getting back to the kitchen, then. (Sally starts to exit)

Sally: No. *(Sally's slowed down.)*

James: Good. Just wanted to have a talk with my sister, that's all. Didn't realize I was intruding.

James: Yes?

Sally: You're not.

Sally: Tell me!

James: Sure don't feel welcome.

James: First, you apologize for snapping at me when I came in.

Sally: It's just--well, hadn't you better go back to the kitchen? Master Jefferson will be home soon. *(Sally is very sorry. It was very mean of me.)*

James: Oh, I see. You haven't heard.

Sally: Heard what? *(Sally is very, very sorry. Now, please tell me.)*

James: Hm! Isn't this interesting. I know something about Master Jefferson that you don't. *(Sally is it is--you can stop looking out those windows. He's not coming back today.)*

Sally: What?

James: Give me a moment, now. Don't crowd me, I'll tell you. But first, I need to know what it's worth to you.

Sally: Where did you hear that?

Sally: Don't be silly. Either tell me or don't.

James: Jupiter.

James: All right. I won't.

(The two remain in silence for a moment. JAMES takes pleasure in SALLY'S apparent agitation.)

James: Plenty. Knows as much about Master Jefferson as anybody. Well, almost

James: Bothers you, doesn't it?

Sally: Not at all. Whatever it is, I'm sure it's not important.

James: You are so right. It isn't important--to *me*. But I'll bet it will be to you. *(Pause)*

No? Well, I suppose I should be getting back to the kitchen, then. *(JAMES starts to exit with exaggerated slowness.)*

Sally: But what about Martha? Why, she and Mr. Randolph came all this way to see him!

Sally: James!

James: Since when were you so concerned about Martha?

James: Yes?

Sally: I'm not, it's just--

Sally: Tell me!

James: My, but you are getting predictable.

James: First, you apologize for snapping at me when I came in.

Sally: What do you mean?

Sally: I'm sorry James. It was very mean of me.

James: I'd be wary of that, if I were you. He might get bored. They so often do.

James: Not sure I believed that.

Sally: Don't you have to get back to the kitchen?

Sally: James, I'm so very, very sorry. Now, please tell me.

James: Yes, sir. Pretty predictable--just sitting here waiting for him. Like a lap dog.

James: All right. I still don't believe you, but I never could deny my little sister anything.

So here it is--you can stop looking out those windows. He's not coming back today.

Sally: Go on, James. Get back to work.

Sally: Nonsense.

James: Don't have to. Not with Master Jefferson gone. It's easy to cook for a mess of

James: It's the truth.

Sally: Where did you hear that? What's Jupiter doing out there?

James: Jupiter. *(Sally is fixing to tell Mr. Randolph and Mr. Randolph to meet the Master in*

Washington. They'll all come back here together, I expect.)

Sally: What does he know?

James: Plenty. Knows as much about Master Jefferson as anybody. Well, almost anybody.

Sally: I'm not.

Sally: Don't be rude.

James: You are.

James: Jupiter said Master Jefferson has to stay in Washington a while longer. Be back two weeks from today.

Sally: But what about Martha? Why, she and Mr. Randolph came all this way to see him!

James: Since when were you so concerned about Martha?

Sally: I'm not, it's just--

James: My, but you are getting predictable.

Sally: What do you mean?

James: I'd be wary of that, if I were you. He might get bored. They so often do.

Sally: Don't you have to get back to the kitchen?

James: Yes, sir. Pretty predictable--just sitting here waiting for him. Like a lap dog. You're a loyal woman, Sally. I only hope he appreciates you.

James: No need to be sassy with me. Your own brother.

Sally: Go on, James. Get back to work.

Sally: I'm sorry, James. I'm just upset, that's all.

James: Don't have to. Not with Master Jefferson gone. It's easy to cook for a mess of servants. Like you and me.

Sally: *(Straining to see out the window)* What's Jupiter doing out there?

James: Oh, he's fixing to take Ms. Martha and Mr. Randolph to meet the Master in Washington. They'll all come back here together, I expect.

Sally: How nice for them. *me alone. I'm all out of sorts. I... the more you tell me*

James: Now, now. No need to be jealous. *anyway. And I know why.*

Sally: I'm not. *you?*

James: You are. *want to know is, didn't you pay any attention to them when we were growing up?*

Sally: I'm not. I just wish--

Sally: *What's Mama got to do with anything?*

James: That you could go, too.

James: *Sally, you're a smart woman. Always have been. Why don't you start acting like*

Sally: Yes.

James: Well, you can't. *ing upstairs.*

Sally: Thank you, James. As if I didn't know that! *and with because he's not winning James today?*

James: Well, did you?

Sally: *Why are you being so mean?*

Sally: Of course I did.

James: I'm not. Just trying to help, that's all.

James: Sometimes I wonder, that's all.

Sally: Help!

Sally: Why don't you go somewhere else to think about it, then.

James: *That's right. Help you handle this right.*

James: No need to be sassy with me. Your own brother.

Sally: *Oh, no. More advice.*

Sally: I'm sorry, James. I'm just upset, that's all.

James: *Stop looking at me like that. You'll give yourself wrinkles, and then Mama*

James: Upset! To have time all to yourself? I tell you, sometimes I worry about you.

Sally: Don't bother. I manage.

James: What am I going to do with you? *smart woman. Maybe even a little smarter than you and me. Always knows what to do, always handles things right. (SALLY nods in*

Sally: James, please leave me alone. I'm all out of sorts.

James: I know it. You're always out of sorts anymore. And I know why.

Sally: No.

Sally: Oh, do you?

James: What I want to know is, didn't you pay any attention to Mama when we were growing up?

Sally: What's Mama got to do with anything?

James: Sally, you're a smart woman. Always have been. Why don't you start acting like one?

Sally: Oh, hush. I'm going upstairs.

James: What you going to do? Go sit in his room and sulk because he's not coming home today?

Sally: Why are you being so mean?

James: I'm not. Just trying to help, that's all.

Sally: Help!

James: That's right. Help you handle this right.

Sally: Oh, no. More advice.

James: Stop looking at me like that. You'll give yourself wrinkles, and then Master Jefferson won't want you anymore. Now, you going to listen or not?

Sally: I'm listening.

James: Good. Now, you know Mama is a smart woman. Maybe even a little smarter than you and me. Always knows what to do, always handles things right. (SALLY nods in

agreement) You remember how Mama was with Mr. Wayles? *(She nods yes)* Did you ever think she was in love with him?

Sally: No.

James: She ever walk around all teary eyed when he left town?

Sally: Don't be ridiculous.

James: You want to know why not? Because she knew her place.

Sally: Not this again!

James: Knew her place, and knew her color. That way, she didn't get any ideas. That's what's wrong with you, Sally. You've forgotten all that--where you came from, where you're going to end up. You want something more. I see that. And I understand it. Lord knows, I do. I want something more, too. But the trouble with you is, you can't ever have what you want. It's not possible. And until you remember who you are, and what you are, you aren't ever going to be happy. Just going to be waiting at windows and doors for someone better than you. And don't make any mistake about it--Master Jefferson hasn't forgotten who or what you are. Not likely to, either.

Curtain.

Thomas: Perhaps that's why he liked it so. . . . I should have kept him alert and attentive to his work. . .

(THOMAS looks absently at his timepiece, but, realizing his mistake, quickly returns it to his coat. One gets the sense that he is torn between his clear intention that his mother never discover this woman's presence, and his fascination with her.)

Thomas: What is that you hold there?

Sally: Oh, this. I found it sitting in one of the rooms. It is a . . . when I remembered . . . many years ago.

Thomas: Really! It's quite beautiful. **Act Two**

Sally: Not especially. I had forgotten. **Scene One**

The entrance hall of Monticello, 1829. SALLY sleeps in Jefferson's chair. She holds the embroidered pillow against her chest. THOMAS appears in the inner doorway. He observes her for a moment--not wanting to wake her, yet clearly determined that his mother not discover her there. He clears his throat a number of times before speaking.

Thomas: Please, do. After all, you made it.

Thomas: Sally.

Sally: Thank you. I do doubt my needlework would have lasted much of a year. I

(SALLY stirs but does not wake. THOMAS tries again--whispering forcefully near her ear.)

Thomas: Sally!

Sally: *(Waking)* Oh! Jeffy--Mr. Randolph. I'm sorry. I must have dozed off for a moment.

Thomas: So I see. Amazing that you could fall asleep in that chair. I've never thought it very comfortable, myself.

Sally: I'm sure it is.

Sally: It isn't.

Thomas: To think that you were in Paris when the Revolution started. It must have been

Thomas: Perhaps that's why he liked it so. . . . It must have kept him alert and. . . attentive to his work. . .

Sally: It was.

(THOMAS looks absently at his timepiece, but, realizing his rudeness, quickly returns it to his coat. One gets the sense that he is torn between his determination that his mother never discover this woman's presence, and his fascination with--or even attraction to--her.)

Thomas: What is that you hold there?

Sally: Oh, this. I found it sitting in one of the crates. It is a pillow I embroidered . . . many years ago.

Thomas: Really! It's quite beautiful.

Sally: Not especially. I had forgotten about it, but then when I saw it. . . oh noise! I wondered that he could concentrate, but he said he could not work in silence. Always

Thomas: (*Looks toward stairs cautiously*) Would you like to keep it?

Sally: I couldn't.

Thomas: Please, do. After all, you made it. I will give you a few more moments alone, then.

Sally: Thank you. I do doubt my needlework would have fetched much of a price. I never was very good at it. It was just something to pass the time. Funny how young people always try to *pass* the time. When it will pass of its own accord.

Thomas: (*Looks toward stairs again*) Mother will sleep a few more hours, I expect. I

Thomas: Indeed. (*Pause*) You say you embroidered it long ago. Do you remember how long?

Sally: Are you sure? And when it was so long ago?

Sally: So long! It was in Paris. When your mother and I were girls.

Thomas: Yes. I know. I suppose Mr. Jefferson was with you.

Thomas: It's hard to imagine.

Sally: Thank you, Mr. Randolph. (*Exit*)

Sally: I'm sure it is.

Scene Two

Thomas: To think that you were in Paris when the Revolution started. It must have been such an. . . exciting time.

(*Jefferson, 1794. SALLY straightens Jefferson's desk. Hearing a noise, she rushes to the window. Excited, she quickly straightens Jefferson's desk and*

Sally: It was. (*Jefferson is sitting in his chair. She opens a book at random. Within seconds, JEFFERSON enters. He stops abruptly, observing her with amusement. SALLY*

Thomas: And yet there you were--embroidering pillows, eating and sleeping and. . . once.

Well, life continues, doesn't it? (*Pause*) And what is that in the center. . . a mockingbird, is it?

Sally: (*Looking up*) Master Tom, you're home!

Sally: Yes.

Jefferson: How long have you waited?

Thomas: Grandfather's favorite bird.

Sally: (*Running to him*) Not long.

Sally: Yes, it was.

Thomas: I remember them fluttering about his office. Always making such noise! I wondered that he could concentrate, but he said he could not work in silence. Always hummed, didn't he?

Sally: Always.

Thomas: Very musical man. *(Pause)* Well, I will give you a few more moments alone, then.

Sally: Oh, no. I've stayed too long. I don't want to get you into trouble.

Thomas: *(Looks toward stairs again)* Mother will sleep a few more hours, I expect. I didn't mean to rush you. I'll just. . . leave you for a bit longer.

Sally: Are you sure?

Thomas: Yes.

Sally: Thank you, Mr. Randolph. *(Exits)*

Scene Two

Sally: Of course. I expect she'll be at her window all morning tomorrow.
Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello, 1794. SALLY straightens Jefferson's desk. Hearing a noise, she rushes to the window. Excited, she quickly straightens Jefferson's desk and bed, finally situating herself in his chair. She opens a book at random. Within seconds, JEFFERSON enters. He stops abruptly, observing her with amusement. SALLY pretends to be engrossed in reading--so engrossed that she does not observe his entrance. JEFFERSON knocks on the door frame.

Sally: *(Looking up)* Master Tom, you're home!

Sally: What is?

Jefferson: How long have you waited?

Jefferson: To no longer be first in my little girl's heart.

Sally: *(Running to him)* Not long.

Jefferson: All morning?

Sally: All morning. What kept you?

Jefferson: Well, now! Did you miss me?

Sally: Terribly.

Jefferson: That's better. Always preferable to be utterly honest. *(He sits in his chair, and motions for SALLY to sit on his lap. She does so. He sits back, but finding it uncomfortable, he reaches behind his back to remove the source of discomfort--the small, embroidered pillow.)* What is this? Ah, my pillow. *(Tosses it across room, onto the bed.)* There now. Tell me everything that has happened since I left.

Sally: What a silly question!

Sally: Well, Maria has picked the fabric for her dress.

Jefferson: Answer it.

Jefferson: Excellent. And where is she? I did not see her.

Sally: I listened for your horse all morning.

Sally: Still in her room, I suppose. Mr. Eppes arrives tomorrow.

Jefferson: Yes, I saw you at the window. All eyes. Then you turned and ran. My silly

Jefferson: Ah, and so Maria is in great anticipation? A flurry of grooming and preparation?

Sally: Goose!

Sally: Of course. I expect she'll be at her window all morning tomorrow.

Jefferson: Never mind that. I would not have you any other way. Now, Mr. Eppes.

Jefferson: And I'm sure John will be as flattered as I to be the source of such excitement.

Sally: He will appreciate it, I'm sure. They are so kind to one another.

Jefferson: Yes, their marriage will be a happy one, I think. She could have chosen no better. John is an admirable young man. Still, it is difficult.

Sally: She didn't need much help. Her mind was already made long ago.

Sally: What is?

Jefferson: These brides. Planning ceremonies years in advance of proposals.

Jefferson: To no longer be first in my little girl's heart.

Sally: It's true. We played at being brides in Paris.

Sally: No one could replace you in Maria's heart, Sir. You know that.
even then.

Jefferson: Not so. Eppes can. . . and should. It is the course of things.

Sally: She did.

Sally: Not always. You are still first in Martha's heart. Even though she has married.

Jefferson: Clever girl. And what else has happened?

Jefferson: Yes, I am, though I wonder at times if that's right. Sweet Martha. She is quite lost without me.

Sally: We all are, Master Tom.

Jefferson: Are you, Sally? Are you lost without me?

Sally: What a silly question!

Jefferson: Answer it.

Sally: I listened for your horse all morning.

Jefferson: Yes. I saw you at the window. All eyes. Then you turned and ran. My silly goose.

Jefferson: I shall speak with them both.

Sally: Goose!

Sally: I am sorry, Master Tom.

Jefferson: Never mind that. I would not have you any other way. Now, Ms. Hemings, how have you been in my absence?

Jefferson: You cannot control James—I know that. No one can control him. And Lord knows I've tried. It does no good.

Sally: Lonely, Sir. But otherwise, satisfactory.

Sally: I know you wish you were rid of him.

Jefferson: Did you help Maria select her fabric?

Jefferson: It is not that. It is not that at all. But he is not happy here, and so he makes

Sally: She didn't need much help. Her mind was already made long ago.

Jefferson: These brides. Planning ceremonies years in advance of proposals.

Sally: It's true. We played at being brides in Paris.

Jefferson: I remember that. And knowing Maria, she had Eppes in mind as her groom, even then.

Sally: She did.

Jefferson: Clever girl. And what else has happened?

Sally: James got himself into a little trouble.

Jefferson: Another fight?

Sally: I'm afraid so. Whiskey again.

Jefferson: The source of so many troubles. Was anyone hurt?

Sally: Isaac lost two teeth. James bloodied his nose. That is all.

Jefferson: When did this happen?

Sally: Only yesterday.

Jefferson: I shall speak with them both.

Sally: I am sorry, Master Tom.

Jefferson: Sorry! It is not your concern. You cannot control James--I know that. No one can control him. And Lord knows I've tried. It does no good.

Sally: I know you wish you were rid of him.

Jefferson: It is not that. It is not that at all. But he is not happy here, and so he makes everyone else. . .

Sally: Unhappy.

Jefferson: So there isn't. I didn't think to--Well, then, you may put in it whatever you like.

Sally: What should I put in it?

Jefferson: I don't know. We will think on that.

Sally: Perhaps your likeness?

Jefferson: Mine! Well, if that is what you want. You certainly can't have an empty locket, now can you?

Sally: Of course not.

Jefferson: And has my little mother taken care of herself?

Sally: I think so.

Jefferson: You think so! Come here--let me have a look at you. Hm! Have you been sleeping?

Sally: Yes, Sir.

Jefferson: But not so well as when I'm home, hm?

Sally: No. Not so well.

Jefferson: Then it is good that I've returned, is it not?

Sally: Very good.

Jefferson: Have you told your mother?

Sally: Not yet.

Jefferson: Sally.

Sally: I will. It is only--I was so disappointed when I lost. . .

Jefferson: I know. This time will be different. I promise.

Sally: And I can't bear everyone staring. . .

Jefferson: *(Laughing)* My silly girl, everyone will know soon enough. You cannot hide it for long. In fact. . . turn around for me.

Sally: Master Tom!

Jefferson: Turn, please. *(She does so)* Ah. Just as I suspected. You have grown considerably larger since I've been gone. Good Lord, but you're enormous!

Sally: That's not funny.

Jefferson: No, it isn't. It's a very serious and alarming matter. My, my. . . I don't even know if I can get my arms around you. . . *(Reaches around her with exaggerated gesture)* There! I did it.

Sally: Master Tom!

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: I had him home with me three years. The most time we ever had. Three years. And I was content. Having been granted almost all I ever wanted. . . for a time. I had my healthy baby--Harriet, we named her. A beautiful child. Fair skinned, like her father, and with those same cool, blue eyes. A fine spray of freckles across her face and hands. And precocious! Always singing and laughing! Laughing at her mama, just as her father always did. My, but she was bright. The brightest point in my life. . . . When they gave her to me, I thought I finally had that piece of him that I could hold and love, even when he was gone. For though he promised he would not leave again, he grew restless as the years passed. And I knew duty would reclaim him. It always did.

Sally: But the birth was hard, and mine was a long recovery. And so Master Tom brought in a young girl, Edy, to help look after Harriet. Oh, how the other servants talked of that! Of Master Jefferson's woman--the "fine Ms. Hemings" with all of her uppity airs

and privileges. Mama told me what was said--looking at me reproachfully, as if the talk were all my fault. I suppose she thought me uppity, too. She did not understand why I was not liked, for though she had been Master Wayles woman, her loud laughter and forward ways had always made her a favorite among the other servants. Not so with me. I didn't try to prove myself to them--I was too shy and private. Especially about Master Tom. I could never have laughed and talked of him to the other servants, as Mama had of Master Wayles. Could never have shared my moments with him.

Sally: You smell of horse, I presume. Scene Three

Sally's seldom-used slave cabin at Monticello, 1795. SALLY leans over a cradle, rocking it gently. Assured that the baby sleeps, she walks to a nearby chair and sits. From beneath the chair, she procures drawing supplies. She begins to sketch the child.

JEFFERSON enters.

Jefferson: No, I'm not hungry.

Jefferson: There you are! I searched for you all morning. (*Observing the sleeping baby, he lowers his voice*) I'm sorry. I didn't realize she slept.

Sally: You don't have to whisper. You won't wake her. She likes to hear people talk. In fact, she likes it better than the quiet. I've been talking all morning long, trying to keep her down, but I'd run out of things to say.

Jefferson: I can't believe that. Where is Edy?

Sally: I sent her out to play.

Jefferson: It seems she's always playing out of doors.

Sally: She's a child. She's supposed to play. Besides, there was nothing for her to do with the baby asleep, and I wanted to draw.

Jefferson: Let me see. Well! That is very good.

Sally: Thank you.

Jefferson: What is it?

Sally: Now, don't make fun. I'm out of practice.

Jefferson: I wouldn't say that. Yet I do question the two heads.

Sally: Hush, now.

Jefferson: I see. You require absolute silence for your masterpiece, then?

Sally: You smell of horse. I presume you've had your ride.

Jefferson: Yes. And I presume those are meant to be hands.

Sally: *(Putting sketch away)* I give up. Are you hungry? Shall I make you something?

Jefferson: No, I'm not hungry.

Sally: Thirsty?

Jefferson: No. Now, tell me, where have you been all day? I've searched and searched.

Sally: You can't have searched that hard. I've been here with the baby all day.

Jefferson: Here! The last place I looked.

Sally: That is always the way.

Jefferson: But I thought you'd be about. Why, it's a beautiful day. It is cool and there's a breeze.

Sally: I know.

Jefferson: Don't you feel well?

Sally: I feel fine.

Jefferson: It's awfully stuffy in here. Wouldn't you rather sit outside?

Sally: I'm comfortable.

Jefferson: Well, I'm not. I'm going to open the door and windows.

Sally: Please, don't!

Jefferson: Why not?

Sally: I like them closed.

Jefferson: For heaven's sake, why?

Sally: I don't like to. . . hear people talking. Or to have them hear me, for that matter.

Jefferson: Now I see. You are upset. Come, *(Sitting, he pats his lap--motioning for her to sit)* tell me all about it.

Sally: I'm not a child!

Jefferson: *(Stung)* I was only. . . . Yes, I realize that.

(A long pause. SALLY remains seated, looking down at her lap.)

Sally: I'm sorry. I should not have snapped at you. It is only--

Jefferson: The talk has upset you again.

Sally: Yes.

Jefferson: What has been said?

Sally: It doesn't matter. What is ever said? It is all the same. I cannot--they will not accept me.

Jefferson: I am sorry, dear. And that is why you stayed in today?

Sally: I could not bear the laughing. Ever since Edy came, it has been worse. They--

Jefferson: Take it as a sign of preference.

Sally: Yes. I am not a child.

Jefferson: That preference is clear. Everyone knows it. The only reason there is still talk is. . . boredom. Whiskey and gossip--that is how they pass the time.

Sally: But perhaps we could pretend for a bit.

Sally: Could there not be some new subject of gossip?

Jefferson: Perhaps we could.

Jefferson: It interests them. And I'm afraid it always will. We must accept it.

Sally: All right. *(Sits on his lap)* Tell me about your day.

Sally: I can't. I have tried, and I find that. . . I can't.

Jefferson: Well, as you politely observed, I smell of horse. And as you know I took my

Jefferson: Come, now. You are above low gossip, aren't you?

Sally: I don't feel above anything today. *(LJ is curled up in Jefferson's chair, much as she was seated on his lap in the previous scene.)*

Jefferson: No. There are days when one can bear less than others, aren't there? My poor girl--ah! but I forget again that you are not a child.

Sally: I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. *(how I loved to hear. To hear the simplest things.)*

His day--I watched him go through it in my mind's eye--these moments I'd missed.

Jefferson: Then you are a child? *(too quiet here now. Slight silence as she--)*

I won't think of that. He wouldn't want me to. Oh, but I am a girl! *(the ghost.)*

Sally: I've behaved like one today. Hiding from people, closing all the windows and doors. As if what they say matters!

What have we here? Smaller things. *(The ivory box--I'd forgotten it. Lord! His peony pipe! I wonder Sally didn't keep that. My--)*

Jefferson: But it does, at times, doesn't it? *(Sally had been there once. My husband! I wondered whatever. . . I meant to take it with me, but then I-- couldn't find it.)*

Sally: It seems to. *(to Martha Wayles Jefferson? Well! If that be't--my husband, mislabeled and boxed for sale. I wonder if Martha knew better. But she wouldn't. Fancy--)*

Jefferson: Well, if you were a child (which, of course, you are not), I think I should like to hold you on my lap until you felt better.

Sally: Do you really think that would help?

Jefferson: It might. It has in the past.

Sally: Well, I am not a child.

Jefferson: No, you most certainly are not.

Sally: But perhaps we could pretend for a bit.

Jefferson: Perhaps we could.

Sally: All right. *(Sits on his lap)* Tell me about your day.

Jefferson: Well, as you politely observed, I smell of horse. And so you know I took my usual ride. . . but I did see something rather extraordinary today. As I rode past the. . .

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829. SALLY is curled up in Jefferson's chair, much as she was seated on his lap in the previous scene.

Sally: That calm voice. Others seldom heard it. He rarely spoke in public, and when he did, it was a different voice entirely--dry and measured. But when he spoke to me. . . his voice was smooth and musical. And how I loved to listen. To even the simplest things. His day--I watched him go through it in my mind's eye--those moments I'd missed. I heard them all in that voice. It is too quiet here now. *(Sighs)* Silent as the--

Harriet I won't think of that. He wouldn't want me to. Oh, but I am a goose! *His* goose. Still worrying about what he would want, even after. . . Enough of that. *(Directs her attention to another crate of items)* What have we here? Smaller things. Thimbles. That ivory box--I'd forgotten it. Lord! His peace pipe! I wonder Jeffy didn't keep that. My, the things you forget until you see them. . . *(Pulls hairbrush from crate)* My hairbrush! I wondered whatever. . . I meant to take it with me, but then I. . . couldn't find it. *(Reads)* "Belonged to Martha Wayles Jefferson." Well! If that isn't--my hairbrush, mislabeled and boxed for sale. I wonder if Martha knew better. But she wouldn't. Fancy them selling it as mine! "Belonged to Sally Hemings, quadroon mistress to the President of the United States."

got to Tarnished. Needs polish. Imagine selling it like this! He brought it back from Philadelphia. After I lost my baby. My first Harriet. Diphtheria. Struck while he was away. Took my baby girl. . . left me alone, in silence--watching another tiny box being lowered into earth. Beside her brother. Me. . . just standing there above those. . . fragments of him I'd sought to keep. But couldn't. Could never keep anything, really. No sign that it ever happened. That it was real.

Jeffers I sent a letter telling him of her death. Our dearest Harriet, our shared loss. Though it seemed only to be mine. He wrote back only with instructions for her burial in the slave cemetery. More silence. No indication that she was his daughter, no hint that he mourned her. Instead, news of another death.

In Paris. James. My brother, James. What did he find in Paris? Was freedom an illusion? Did he try to. . . free himself with rope? My brother James, who took a rope, drew it around his thin, young neck, and. . . James, spotted by strangers on the street--a hanging silhouette in the window. Light flickering behind him. And so they knew to. . . cut him down. Master Tom wrote all of this to me. Spared me nothing. As if he laid his guilt before me, asking, "Can you still love such a man?" I could. I did. And it was when he returned to Monticello that he brought this brush. It was a set then, all in silver. The brush, a mirror, and a comb. In a case of presents. He always brought home presents. For Martha, the grandchildren, and the servants. And me. (*Looking at brush*). A set then: brush, mirror, and comb. *rich for you.*

That night, I brushed my hair. And he sat me down in front of him. Took the brush from my hand, and slowly ran it through my hair. Brushed my hair like that for a long time. And then, he wrapped my hair around his hand and sat there, staring at it. Held my hair like he held a horse's reins--with a kind of gentle control. As if to say, "mine." The way he held me, stared at my hair around his hand, I knew he had mourned Harriet. Felt grief, even guilt over James. It was the closest he ever came to saying any of it. He brought me other presents that day. Hid them all over his bedroom--in his drawers and closet. I found things, little trinkets, for weeks after his return. But I loved this brush the best. Sometimes, I still feel him touch my hair.

Jeffers It was a set then. But gradually I lost the other pieces, and so the brush is all that's left. I don't remember what happened to the comb, but the mirror! Oh, how my boy Madison loved that mirror! He loved all things that sparkled. He took it out in the woods with him one day. To catch the sun, he said. He stayed out until dark chasing that sun until he lost it completely and had trouble finding his way home, the sun had strayed so far. He tripped and fell in the dark. Shattered the mirror. Came running home with his hands all cut and bleeding, holding three pieces of glass. He said, "Mama! Mama! We've

got to paste these back together again, or I'll have seven years bad luck!" I kneeled down and promised him that he would have nothing but good luck all of his days. Told him I'd arranged for that long ago.

Sally: Who is this Mr. Callender? Scene Four

Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello, 1801. JEFFERSON lies in bed, reading a book. SALLY brushes her hair.

Sally: You know, the misshapen little man at dinner.

Sally: You don't have enough light to read. Should I bring you another lamp?

Jefferson: Ah, my spy watched the dinner party, then?

Jefferson: No, don't bother. I can't read anymore. Too tired.

Sally: Of course.

Sally: Of course you are. You've been doing the work of a hundred men, and entertaining a hundred men besides.

Sally: You're a man's man. You're a man's man. You're a man's man.

Jefferson: Not this again. What would you have me do? Sit in one place all day?

Sally: I'd like it. Besides, you deserve a rest. It's been nothing but visitors and dinner parties all summer. It is too much for you.

Sally: Such as Mr. Callender is not to be trusted.

Jefferson: Do you hint that I'm growing old? You can say it openly. It's true.

Jefferson: Sally! How dramatic you sound!

Sally: But it's not. You're as healthy and strong as ever.

Sally: I don't mean to, but it's true. You mark my words.

Jefferson: I am fifty-eight years of age, Sally. I am old.

Jefferson: I always do.

Sally: You are not. But it is tiring having guests about you so much of the time.

Sally: Master Tom, I'm serious.

Jefferson: So it is. I often want to lock the doors--keep all company out--so that I may rest peacefully with my family. But they are all dear friends. I am flattered that they wish to see me.

Sally: Many things. For one, he is a drunkard.

Sally: Of course they wish to see you! It doesn't make it any less exhausting, though.

Jefferson: A drunkard! I know he enjoys his wine. But... a drunkard? I don't think so.

Jefferson: No, it certainly doesn't. Come, lie down.

Sally: In a minute. *(Pause)* Master Tom?

Jefferson: Mm? *do you know?*

Sally: Who is this Mr. Callender? *such that you don't sit those dinners.*

Jefferson: Mr. Callender? *how is that?*

Sally: You know, the misshapen little man at dinner. *no-one asks me questions that require a clever answer. I'm not preoccupied with food, because I'm not eating. My*

Jefferson: Ah, my spy watched the dinner party, then? *ing. All I do is watch. And so, I see.*

Sally: Of course.

Jefferson: *And my spy saw James (a few) after glass of wine, is that it?*

Jefferson: What do you see at these parties that is of such interest, Sally?

Sally: *No, it wasn't the amount he drank. It was the way he drank. How he looked when*

Sally: Many things.

Jefferson: Such as? *did he look?*

Sally: Such as Mr. Callender is not to be trusted.

Jefferson: Sally! How dramatic you sound!

Sally: I don't mean to, but it's true. You mark my words. *scope, to other hands.*

Jefferson: I always do. *all that from a few glasses of wine?*

Sally: Master Tom, I'm serious. *making fun.*

Jefferson: Very well. I ask in earnest, what makes you think he cannot be trusted?

Sally: Many things. For one, he is a drunkard.

Jefferson: A drunkard! I know he enjoys his wine, but. . . a drunkard! I don't think so.

and it is his usual conversation.

Sally: He is.

Jefferson: How do you know?

Sally: From watching him. I see much that you don't at those dinners.

Jefferson: Do you? And how is that?

Sally: Because I'm on the outside. Nobody talks to me--no one asks me questions that require a clever answer. I'm not preoccupied with food, because I'm not eating. My senses aren't blurred from drink, because I'm not drinking. All I do is watch. And so, I see.

Sally: And devious.

Jefferson: And my spy saw James Callender consume glass after glass of wine, is that it?

Jefferson: Devious! My, this is beginning to sound positively delightful. My spy has

Sally: No, it wasn't the amount he drank. It was the way he drank. How he looked when he drank.

Sally: Never mind. I'm going to sleep. (Crosses to bed)

Jefferson: And how did he look?

Jefferson: Sally, you've nothing to worry about. Whatever view you had taken upon

Sally: Much like James used to look.

Jefferson: Sally, you can't compare--

Sally: But are you sure he is a safe ally? You know that he exposed Alexander

Sally: He took no time to enjoy his wine. He drank it to escape, to alter himself.

Jefferson: You gleaned all that from a few glasses of wine?

Jefferson: I have heard such talk, yes.

Sally: Never mind. You're just making fun.

Sally: And it didn't alarm you?

Jefferson: How can I not when you talk such nonsense?

Jefferson: And where did you hear such rumors, Sally?

Sally: Well, I don't like him.

Sally: One of your dinners.

Jefferson: Because of the way he looks when he drinks? I assure you, I know that look, and it is his usual countenance.

Sally: It worsens when he looks at you. *my girl. (Holds her) There are. There's nothing for you to worry about. James Callender does have great spleen, but he is utterly devoted*
 Jefferson: Oh, no. There is more.

Sally: If you don't care to hear-- *if he were to become angry with you? Aren't you worried that he might...*

Jefferson: How does it worsen?

Jefferson: What?

Sally: He looks even more misshapen.

Sally: *Write something ill of you?*

Jefferson: That's not possible.

Jefferson: *What could he write? I've led an honorable life.*

Sally: And devious.

Sally: *What if he were to expose--*

Jefferson: Devious! My, this is beginning to sound positively diabolical. My spy has become my guardian. *know your worry. It is the matter of gossip again. What will you-- You fear that he will expose my relations with you, don't you?*

Sally: Never mind. I'm going to sleep. *(Crosses to bed)*

Sally: *Yes.*

Jefferson: Sally, you've nothing to worry about. Whatever view you had when spying obviously allowed for gross misinterpretation. James Callender displays great esteem for me. And he is a very fine journalist. It is useful to have such an ally in the press.

Sally: *I can't help it. I can't abide the talk.*

Sally: But are you sure he is a safe ally? You know that he exposed Alexander Hamilton's affair with Mrs. Reynolds. And I've heard that he began his career in England by making attacks on Samuel Johnson.

Sally: *I'm sure he already knows.*

Jefferson: I have heard such talk, yes.

Jefferson: *How could he?*

Sally: And it didn't alarm you?

Sally: *Oh, Master Tom! There is always gossip among the neighbors. There always has*

Jefferson: And where did you hear such rumors, Sally?

at dinner. And I heard that gossip was a very important part of the social life of the time.

Sally: One of your dinners. *can't concern me.*

Sally: He stared at me. He was silent.

Jefferson: (*Amused*) I see. Come here, my girl. (*Holds her*) There now. There's nothing for you to worry about. James Callender does have great spleen, but he is utterly devoted to me. *He did.*

Sally: Yes, but what if. . . What if he were to become angry with you? Aren't you worried that he might. . .

Sally: *When he first arrived tonight.*

Jefferson: What?

Jefferson: *Well, what if he did? You're a thoughtful woman, Sally. He is not the first man*

Sally: Write something ill of you?

Jefferson: What could he write? I've led an honorable life.

calculating stare.

Sally: What if he were to expose--

Jefferson: *You worry that he would expose you directly, he would expose your secrets, do*

Jefferson: Ah, now I know your worry. It is the matter of gossip again. When will you-- You fear that he will expose my relations with you, don't you?

Sally: *It felt that way.*

Sally: Yes.

Jefferson: *That he looked at you, knew that you were hiding, and that the baby you carry is*

Jefferson: Why must you always worry yourself over this?

Sally: I can't help it. I can't abide the talk.

Jefferson: And how would he learn of our relations? *It's disconcerting at first, but as I said, it is his usual expression. Are you going to mistrust him because of his unfortunate*

Sally: I'm sure he already knows. *looks like a wound setting out the secrets of others.*

(Sniffs at her neck)

Jefferson: How could he?

Sally: *Master Tom, be serious!*

Sally: Oh, Master Tom! There is always gossip among the neighbors. There always has been.

Jefferson: *I'm sorry. I'm only acting as silly as you are, Sally. Callender is utterly devoted to me. And I subsidize many of his affairs. He would not jeopardize that income*

Jefferson: Idle talk! It doesn't concern me.

Sally: He stared at me. *change a threat.*

Jefferson: Stared at you! Nonsense.

Sally: He did. *He stared at you as if . . . There are people, Master Tom, who set out to destroy the men they admire.*

Jefferson: When?

Jefferson: *I am sorry. I didn't mean to—I forget you observe people's intentions more*

Sally: When he first arrived tonight.

Jefferson: Well, what if he did? You are a beautiful woman, Sally. He is not the first man to stare at you. *You. I think this man envies you your achievements, your stature, your good name. I think he wants very much to be a great man, but is incapable of greatness. He*

Sally: It was the way he stared. First at my face, then at my waistline. It was a calculating stare.

Jefferson: *Well, there is no arguing with that.*

Jefferson: You worry that he scrutinized you so closely, he unlocked your secrets, do you? *You said you wouldn't laugh!*

Sally: It felt that way. *But in the face of that . . . astounding assessment, I cannot help but—*

Jefferson: That he looked at you, knew that you are mine, and that the baby you carry is mine. All from a look.

Sally: Yes. That's how it seemed. *Do you scarcely know?*

Jefferson: Callender always looks at people that way. It's disconcerting at first, but as I said, it is his usual expression. Are you going to mistrust him because of his unfortunate appearance? He can't help it if he looks like a weasel sniffing out the secrets of others.
(Sniffs at her neck)

Sally: *Goodnight.*

Sally: Master Tom, be serious!

Jefferson: *Come, now. Don't sulk.*

Jefferson: I'm sorry. I'm only acting as silly as you are. Sally, Callender is utterly devoted to me. And I subsidize many of his efforts. He would not jeopardize that income or my friendship. He is not a threat.

Jefferson: *I thought as much.*

Sally: A jealous man is always a threat.

Jefferson: What do you mean?

Sally: He looks at you as if . . . There are people, Master Tom, who set out to destroy the men they admire.

Sally: James Callender may make a great show of admiring you now, but in time he may

Jefferson: I am sorry. I didn't mean to--I forget you observe people's instincts more carefully than I.

Jefferson: And do you truly think . . . Who would like that can destroy me? Well, do you?

Sally: Then you will listen? *(He nods yes)* And you won't make fun? *(He nods yes)* All right, I'll tell you. I think this man envies you your achievements, your stature, your good name. I think he wants very much to be a great man, but is incapable of greatness. He despises you for your greatness, and drinks to console himself for his want of it.

Jefferson: A little weasel . . .

Jefferson: Well, there is no arguing with *that*.

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1828

Sally: You said you wouldn't laugh!

Sally: I don't blame him for laughing. He was President. Beloved, as he had always

Jefferson: I know it. But in the face of that. . . astounding assessment, I cannot help but--

Randolph often visited. . . Sometimes, Maria and Epes, too. Grandchildren spilling out

Sally: You may mock me, and disregard what I say, but that is what I saw in him tonight. And it frightened me.

And my small family had grown. I'd had a son--our Beverly, and was carrying

Jefferson: You saw all that in a man you scarcely know?

my own babies. And so, perhaps he thought we would not be touched again by pain or

Sally: I saw a man I do not trust.

Once, when Callender was at Monticello, Master Tom sent for me. When I

Jefferson: Yes, you've made that plain.

his back to me. Master Tom stood facing me--his eyes sparkling with mischief, that mouth twisted in a suppressed smile. He wanted to

Sally: Goodnight.

man was harmless, like a father teaching his child not to fear the dark. But when Callender turned to look at me, Master Tom's eyes changed. He caught a

Jefferson: Come, now. Don't sulk.

Callender more carefully, and soon, he acknowledged that I had been right: James

Sally: Well, I will say one more thing.

buying property in the neighborhood, Master Tom discouraged him. Didn't want him

Jefferson: I thought as much.

Sally: Now, hear me, Master Tom.

Jefferson: You have my full attention.

Sally: James Callender may make a great show of admiring you now, but in time he may set out to destroy you. It wouldn't be the first time he's done so to a man.

Jefferson: And do you truly think a little weasel like that can destroy me? Well, do you?
(*Sniffs again at her neck, tickles her*).

Sally: Master Tom!

Jefferson: A little weasel. . .

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: I don't blame him for laughing. He was President. Beloved, as he had always wanted to be. Enjoying great success that term. His home was in harmony. Martha and Randolph often visited. . . . Sometimes, Maria and Eppes, too. Grandchildren spilling out of the house, onto the yard in summer. Laughing and playing. He was never more content than when surrounded by his family.

And my small family had grown. I'd had a son--our Beverly, and was carrying another child--my second Harriet. He was pleased to have me so content--occupied with my own babies. And so, perhaps he thought we would not be touched again by pain or suffering. He laughed at me--the child who knew that there was ever more to come.

Once, when Callender was at Monticello, Master Tom sent for me. When I entered the library, there Callender sat, his back to me. Master Tom stood facing me--his eyes sparkling with mischief, that mouth twisted in a suppressed smile. He wanted to show me that the man was harmless, like a father teaching his child not to fear the dark. But when Callender turned to look at me, Master Tom's eyes changed. He caught a glimpse of what I'd seen. Perhaps even of what would come. He began to watch Callender more carefully, and soon, he acknowledged that I had been right: James Callender was not only a drunkard, but a dangerous man. And when Callender talked of buying property in the neighborhood, Master Tom discouraged him. Didn't want him near. Near me or near his family. His growing coolness seemed to offend Callender, and

it was not long before he began writing his filth about me. Dusky Sally, he called me. The President's concubine.

Jefferson An anxious time. Knowing that I was a threat to my master's career and reputation. That what had been private was exposed to the world. And cheapened by vulgar ballads. (*Recites*)

Resume thy shells and butterflies,

Thy beetle's heads, and lizard's thighs,

The state no more control:

Thy tricks, with *sooty Sal* give o'er:

Indulge thy body, Tom, no more;

But try to save thy *soul*.

He tried to shelter me from the news of Callender's attack, just as he tried to shelter me from. . . everything. But even he could not protect me from those slanders--whispered, spoken about the house. Everyone seemed to know. And Martha. . . Martha was determined that I know the anguish I caused her father.

Sally She was at Monticello when the scandal broke. An evening in September. I saw her leave my room. Her back to me, her head high, she walked down the hallway--taller than ever. I knew something was strange, as she never came to my room. Had not been there since we had returned from Paris.

When I entered, I saw something on the bed--a section clipped from a newspaper. It began: "It is well known that the man, whom it delighteth the people to honor, keeps and for many years has kept, as his concubine, one of his slaves. Her name is SALLY." At the top of the paper was the author's name: James T. Callender. I crumpled the paper, squeezing tighter and tighter, grinding the words in my hand. I walked to the kitchen, throwing it in the fire. But there was no getting rid of it.

I could not sleep that night. Lying in Master Tom's arms, I seemed to see that paper ball uncurling in the fire. "Her name is SALLY. . . keeps as his *concubine*, one of his *slaves*." I wondered what he had thought when he saw those words. But I could not ask. He would decide whether we spoke of this. He would decide.

(*SALLY turns as if to exit, but summoning her courage, addresses him once more.*)

Sally: Master Tom? I. . . I know what the newspapers have been writing about me. There's no need to hide it from me anymore.

Jefferson: I see. You have seen the paper. Scene Five

Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello, 1802.

Jefferson: *(Reads)* "... at first sight it does appear somewhat odd, that 'the solemn, the grave, and the didactic' Mr. Jefferson, a philosopher and metaphysician whom the world might take to be

longer. a man whose blood

Is very snow-broth; one who never feels

Jefferson: The wanton stings and motions of the female, as inevitable that you would hear of

it, I say But doth rebuke and blunt his natural edge very version vulgar, and with barely a

grain of With profits of mind, study and fast.

that such a man should have lived in the habitual violation of the seventh commandment with one of his own slaves!"

(SALLY enters, JEFFERSON quickly shoves newspaper into a drawer.)

Sally: Sir, am I disturbing you? for me, there could be no gossip!

Jefferson: Not at all. I welcome the interruption. I've just been working on my correspondence, and my interest is flagging.

Sally: You! How can you be to blame?

Sally: Oh. I thought you were reading a newspaper.

Jefferson: I was careless in my acquaintance, just as you said.

Jefferson: Well, it--What do you need, Sally?

Sally: Oh, Master Tom--

Sally: A new shipment of books has arrived.

Jefferson: Now, hear me. You were quite right about James Callender. He is a

Jefferson: Thank you. Tell Martin to leave them until this afternoon. I can't afford the distraction just yet. If I see them, I'll never finish.

Sally: I would much rather have been wrong, Sir.

(SALLY turns as if to exit, but summoning her courage, addresses him once more.)

Jefferson: Yes, I would rather have had you wrong. But I have learned my lesson and

Sally: Master Tom? I... I know what the newspapers have been writing about me.

There's no need to hide it from me anymore.

Jefferson: I see. You have seen the papers, then?

Sally: No, but I've heard. You know how quickly talk circulates.

Jefferson: Yes, unfortunately, I do.

Sally: I only wanted you to know that you need not. . . try to shelter me from it any longer.

Sally: What will you do?

Jefferson: I'd hoped to keep this from you. But it was inevitable that you would hear of it, I suppose. The damned story is everywhere. Every version vulgar, and with barely a grain of truth.

Sally: But will you not make a denial?

Sally: I'm sorry, Master Tom.

Jefferson: How can I? (Pause) I will say nothing. The *Palmerston* papers all demand a

Jefferson: You are not to blame, Sally.

Sally: But I am! If it were not for me, there could be no gossip!

Jefferson: I won't have you blaming yourself. If anyone is to blame, it is I.

twenty new ones would be invented. (Rings temple)

Sally: You! How can you be to blame?

Sally: Your poor head! Shall I bring you a cool cloth?

Jefferson: I was careless in my acquaintance, just as you said.

Jefferson: No, Sally. There is no help for it. It has been with me since dawn. I don't

Sally: Oh, Master Tom--all this is resolved.

Jefferson: Now, hear me. You were quite right about James Callender. He is a contemptible man, and a drunkard. You showed considerable foresight.

Jefferson: There will be a resolution, of course. The difficulty is in dragging one about

Sally: I would much rather have been wrong, Sir.

Jefferson: Yes, I would rather have had you wrong. But I have learned my lesson and will use your foresight to my advantage. From now on, I shall have you spy on *all* my dinners. Sally, I don't want you to feel in any way responsible. I will protect you, and my family. You needn't worry. We must simply wait.

Sally: Sir, please don't make light of it. I know you are upset.

Jefferson: It will pass. Don't trouble yourself over it.

Sally: I can't help but worry.

Jefferson: My poor girl. I knew you would, once you heard. That's why I tried to. . .

Sally: What will you do?

Jefferson: There is nothing to do.

Sally: But will you not make a denial?

Jefferson: How can I? *(Pause)* I will say nothing. The Federalist papers all demand a denial, but I will not give it to them. I will not.

Sally: But. . . don't you fear that your silence will be taken as evidence of guilt?

Jefferson: I will not answer the calumnies of the newspapers. For while I answer one, twenty new ones would be invented. *(Rubs temples)*

Sally: Your poor head! Shall I bring you a cool cloth?

Jefferson: No, Sally. There is no help for it. It has been with me since dawn. I don't expect it will leave me until this is resolved.

Sally: Can there be a resolution?

Jefferson: There will be a resolution, of course. The difficulty is in bringing one about which does not destroy my career and family.

Sally: I am sorry to be the cause of your. . .

Jefferson: Sally, I don't want you to feel in any way responsible. I will protect you, and my family. You needn't worry. We must simply wait.

Sally: For what?

Jefferson: I have given it great thought. It seems to me that if Callender could be silenced, the others. . . . They merely copy his slanders.

Sally: If you think it best.

Sally: But how will he be silenced?

Jefferson: I do. I refuse to have my life shared by vile gossip. Things will continue as

Jefferson: That is the difficulty.

Sally: Master Tom, do you think perhaps I should leave for awhile?

Jefferson: Leave!

Sally: I could go with Maria when she returns to Edgehill. Take Beverly and Harriet. At least until the gossip stops.

Jefferson: Good. I cannot withstand gossip either.

Jefferson: Who would that serve?

Sally: I'm sorry. I only meant to—

Sally: It may silence the talk.

Jefferson: Let us speak of it no more. Now, if that is all, I should like to resume my

Jefferson: Or it will be taken as confirmation--a cowardly means of deception.

Sally: Or a sign of repentance.

Jefferson: Repentance! Good Lord, who put this idea into your head?

Blaming the one who sought to love him best. Yet, in the end, Master Tom was right--it

Sally: Martha suggested it. And I think it might be wise.

River--doubtless, another drunken error. And as Master Tom predicted, without

Jefferson: Martha. Well, this is not Martha's affair! Damn her for interfering!

And James Callender did not destroy him. No one could, it seemed. His first term

Sally: Master!

any relief or joy he felt at this was too soon clouded. Far too soon.

Jefferson: I'm sorry. I don't mean to lose my temper. But I will not have your coming and going dictated by Martha. You will stay here, and I want to hear nothing more about it.

She made that journey after giving birth--perhaps knowing those would be her final weeks. That she did for him, though I don't suppose he knew it.

Sally: But she will mention it to you.

Jefferson: Then I will tell her. You and the children will stay here.

Sally: If you think it best.

Jefferson: I do. I refuse to have my life altered by vile gossip. Things will continue as they have. In any event, I must have you at Monticello, if I'm to weather this at all.

Sally: Of course, you are right.

Jefferson: Then we'll hear no more talk of leaving?

Sally: Yes, Sir.

Jefferson: Good. I cannot withstand much more today.

Sally: I'm sorry. I only meant to--

Jefferson: Let us speak of it no more. Now, if that is all, I should like to resume my correspondence.

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: And so I stayed, though it was difficult--with so many eyes watching, accusing.

Blaming the one who sought to love him best. Yet, in the end, Master Tom was right--it mattered little. For James Callender's body was soon found drowned in the James River--doubtless, another drunken error. And as Master Tom predicted, without Callender's fiery words, the embers cooled.

And James Callender did not destroy him. No one could, it seemed. His first term was so successful, nothing--not even the scandal--could not prevent his re-election. But any relief or joy he felt at this was too soon clouded. Far too soon.

(Touches her locket) Dearest Maria. Too delicate, in spirit and body--so like her mother. Too like her, I think. Their ends, the same. Yet there was a strength to both of them--a selfless giving. She made that journey after giving birth--perhaps knowing those would be her final weeks. That she did for him, though I don't suppose he knew it.

Never quite knew the sacrifices that were made. . . . She was too weak to stand, and so the servants carried her the four miles to the top of his mountain. And when I came to see her, laid out in her old room--our yet living corpse--I hardly knew her.

Sally: She leaned forward in her excitement, holding out that frail young hand. I took it, and gasped a little to see several long clumps of hair fall onto her pillow. It was not the fair mass of ringlets that I had brushed and braided when we were girls. This hair was coarse, like a horse's tail, and streaked with gray far before her time--for she was but twenty-five. She smiled. Lifting the corners of that sweet mouth with visible effort. "Glorious childbirth," she said. "I think I should have preferred intellect--this beauty was too brief." I cast my eyes down, for she had lost several teeth.

Those were long nights. Vomit, bleeding, and sweat. And the sometimes talk--mixed words from present and past. Discernible only to me. For she wanted me most. Just as she had on our long journey. As if I were her mother. But she had always thought of me as that. . . . And when I placed my hand on that wet and burning face, she slowed her breathing and tried to smile. As if to say, "That is what I wanted all along." Touch. Assurance. That someone knew the sacrifice.

Martha came to her. And took her new baby to her breast when it proved sickly. We two stood together by her bed, watching silently. Hardly aware of the other, I think. For once, something more important than our. . . private war. But then, it was resumed. That last night, she stood behind me. Pressed her hand against my back and said, "I'll sit with her now." I felt the old antagonism--Martha dictating when I was to leave. Stealing precious time from me again. But I could not argue it. Not then, when her sister lay dying. And then, Maria was insensible. She had not known that I was there--she had not known for hours, I think. And so I left her.

Sally: I wish I had been.

Scene Six

Jefferson: I shall not survive this. *(Rising again, walks to the window)* My tiny girl

Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello, 1804. SALLY sits in Jefferson's chair, staring ahead blankly. She is disheveled and tired--having clearly kept vigil throughout the night. JEFFERSON enters. He is also disheveled. He stands in the room's center, unable to speak, or choose his next course of action. The two acknowledge one another silently before speaking.

Sally: It is done, then. *(JEFFERSON nods slowly)* She slept when I left her. Did it happen in her sleep?

Jefferson: She woke a moment before. Grasped my hand. Tried to look at me, seemed to look. . . through me. Then--

That I shall never again have the one that means more to me than. . . That same pale face,

Sally: *(Rising)* Don't.

Powerless. Useless. And Eppes. Living what I've lived. Two men who can do nothing

Jefferson: It is too much.

Announcing empty hours. That thin thread of happiness--broken.

Sally: I know.

Sally: I remember.

Jefferson: Damn it! How can I--

Jefferson: I cannot bear this, Sally.

Sally: Where is Martha?

Sally: I should have been there. I loved her, too.

Jefferson: Nursing the baby. Would that it had never been--

Jefferson: And she loved you. Why, all last night, she talked of you. Or to you.

Sally: Master Tom!

Sally: She did?

Jefferson: Forgive me, I do not mean it.

Jefferson: In her sleep. And a little this morning. I think she thought she was on the

Sally: You should rest now. Sit down. *(He walks to the bed slowly, sitting mechanically)* Was Martha there . . . ?

Sally: She always dreamt of that ship, she told me. When she was ill or worried. We

Jefferson: Yes. Poor thing.

Sally: I wish I had been.

Jefferson: I shall not survive this. *(Rising again, walks to the window)* My tiny girl!

What shall be my happiness now?

Jefferson: She wanted you to have. . .

Sally: My love.

Sally: What?

Jefferson: What is the sense in any of it? It is the same! It is the same! Her mother. . .

Jefferson: This, *(Fumbles inside a pocket, procuring a small object)* I think. This lock of

Sally: I remember. . . my child's hair, fallen. . . And she twisted it around her finger throughout the night. It seemed to calm her. And then once, early this morning, she

Jefferson: It is as if I relive the day. Most awful of days. The same smells and sounds. The clock's same ticking. And never enough time. Knowing that this is to be the last. That I shall never again have the one that means more to me than. . . That same pale face, and those same hands, clutching damp linens. And pain! Pain I cannot remove. Powerless. Useless. And Eppes. Living what I've lived. Two men who can do nothing but watch that light burn out, and sit in darkness. With the clock's same ticking. Announcing empty hours. That thin thread of happiness--broken.

Sally: I should have been there!

Sally: I remember.

Jefferson: I don't know what she meant to do. But I knew you would want. . .

Jefferson: I cannot bear this, Sally. . . and in that small way. . . you could remember her.

Sally: I should have been there. I loved her, too.

Sally: As if I could forget.

Jefferson: And she loved you. Why, all last night, she talked of you. Or to you.

Jefferson: The purest soul. Her mother's soul.

Sally: She did?

Sally: Why didn't Martha come for me?

Jefferson: In her sleep. And a little this morning. I think she thought she was on the journey . . . to Paris with you, all those years ago.

Sally: She always dreamt of that ship, she told me. When she was ill or worried. We were so happy there.

Jefferson: She didn't. How could she? I was. . . negligent of her.

Jefferson: Perhaps in that small way she escaped the pain.

Sally: Never?

Sally: Yet I was not sent for.

Jefferson: She thought I preferred Martha. She said so, as a child.

Jefferson: She wanted you to have. . .

Sally: Children often say such things.

Sally: What?

Jefferson: But she meant it. And perhaps I did. What if I did?

Jefferson: This, (*Fumbles inside a pocket, procuring a small object*) I think. This lock of hair. It had fallen out. . . my child's hair, fallen. . . . And she twisted it around her finger throughout the night. It seemed to calm her. And then once, early this morning, she

Jefferson: Neglected her. . . just as I did, for that short time. And as poor James had all his life.

Sally: Never. She knew you loved her. . . just as much as Martha. me in Paris—they were given to him and Estlin. They were given fiddles, and lessons so they could play them.

Jefferson: Did she? Do you think she did? Far more than I had been. Oh, but there was talk of that! Mere gossip—at the house, and in the neighborhood. Talk of me and my

Sally: She must have known. I withheld it, for my sons. Would not have them deprived of anything. And yet Madison was not satisfied. The fiddles, books, and lessons

Jefferson: Failed, failed. The worst failure. . . what he wanted—the same thing I had always wanted: Master Tom.

Sally: And she came here to be with you—all these last weeks. . . where Madison did not. And how he missed it—having his father. He would watch Master Tom playing with the

Jefferson: How can I. . . forgive. . . ? boys—for hours. And Master Tom did play! Rolled around in the grass, carried them on his back. Pretended even that he had with his own

Sally: There. (*Seating him on the bed*) . . . that was what Madison craved. He followed

Jefferson: My little child! my heart to watch him perform his stunts. Tom, just as Charles had. Only Master Tom didn't really pay much attention to him. He had with the old

Sally: My love. matter how often I explained it to Madison—the big things were so never understood. Willfully misunderstood. Too much like his Uncle when I was in. Could

Jefferson: My child. What emptiness this is—to lose half of all I had!

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829. Scene Seven

Sally: Half of all. . . . How those words wounded me! Knowing, as I did, that the other half was Martha. Did that not make me nothing, I thought? Or worried, rather. Afraid that it had been for nothing. A useless sacrifice when he did not even. . . need me. To find myself the one who needed. . . And asked nothing in return. Horrible, selfish thoughts at such a time. Looking back, I am ashamed--when I should have mourned Maria entirely, half of my grief was for myself.

Madison I always found it strange that Madison was conceived at that time--when I was hurt and angry at being second in Master Tom's heart. When my soul rebelled against what I thought I had accepted long ago. It was as if all my bitterness and insecurities passed into Madison during the pregnancy. For of all my children, Madison was the one who never seemed to understand how it must be for the master's slave children. The only

Madison: When did he leave for his ride?

one who hated his position. . . just as I did, for that short time. And as poor James had all his life.

Madison: Madison had compensations. The music lessons offered to me in Paris--they were given to him and Eston. They were given fiddles, and lessons so they could play them. And they had a tutor, books--were educated. Far more than I had been. Oh, but there was talk of that! More gossip--at the house, and in the neighborhood. Talk of me and my spoiled passel of children. But I withstood it, for my sons. Would not have them deprived of anything. And yet Madison was not satisfied. The fiddles, books, and lessons were not enough for him. Poor substitutes for what he wanted--the same thing I had always wanted: Master Tom.

Madison: Yet in that, I was privileged one. I enjoyed time with him, where Madison did not. And how he missed it--having his father. He would watch Master Tom playing with the grandchildren--Martha's and Maria's boys--for hours. And Master Tom did play! Rolled around in the grass, carried them on his back. Frolicked more than he had with his own girls. He loved them, and showed it. That was what Madison missed. He followed Master Tom, always tried to get his attention by playing on his fiddle, or talking of what he'd read. Used to break my heart to watch him perform for Master Tom--just as Cicero had. Only Master Tom didn't really pay much attention to him, like he had with that old bird. And no matter how often I explained it to Madison--the way things were--he never understood. Willfully misunderstood. Too much like his Uncle James, I suppose. Could not never accept what he did not like.

Madison: I need to talk to him.

Scene Seven

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1823. SALLY has aged somewhat--her carriage and mannerisms being much as they are throughout her narrative. She is seated near a window with a book. MADISON quickly enters through the inner door. He is a young man, somewhat darker than his mother, and around eighteen years of age. He walks directly to the windows, peers out, and, becoming agitated, turns to address his mother.

Madison: (To himself) Still not back. Damn it. (To SALLY) When do you think he'll be home?

Madison: I didn't mean--

Sally: I don't know.

Sally: Then what did you mean?

Madison: When did he leave for his ride?

Sally: Three hours ago, I think.

Madison: Three hours. He should be back by now. Aren't you worried?

Sally: *(Closing her book)* Why do you think I'm sitting here?

Madison: He shouldn't be riding. Getting too old for that.

Sally: Do you want to be the one to tell him that?

Madison: No. It's not my place.

Sally: It's no one's place. Where's Eston?

Madison: Upstairs with Uncle John. Working on the banister.

Sally: Shouldn't you be helping?

Madison: In a minute.

Sally: I'm sure he's fine. You go back upstairs.

Madison: I need to talk to him.

Sally: I see. *(MADISON looks out window)* My, you're almost as bad as I am. Spent my whole life doing that. Staring out of windows. At least now, I'm sensible enough to bring a book.

Madison: Don't talk like that. I'm not like you. Not like you at all.

Sally: Well! If that isn't flattering!

Madison: I didn't mean--

Sally: Then what did you mean?

Madison: I'm sorry.

Sally: I should hope so. *(Pause)* Certainly do behave like me, for all your denials. Always looking for him, worrying about him.

Madison: I'm not worried. Just think he's acting foolish. Out there on a horse at his age.

Sally: He loves his rides. Why, the day he can't do that anymore. . . Besides, I think it's good for him.

Madison: Why are you sitting here watching the window, then, if it's so good for him?

Sally: I'm not watching the window, dear. You are.

Madison: Fair enough.

Sally: *(Pause)* What do you need to discuss with him?

Madison: Nothing important.

Sally: Looks as if it's pretty important.

Madison: It isn't your concern.

Sally: What's the matter, Madison? Is there something I can do?

Madison: You've done enough already.

Sally: Apparently I haven't, if I raised my sons to talk to me like this.

Madison: I'm sorry, Mama. I don't mean to snap at you. It's just--

Sally: What's wrong?

Madison: Nothing. It's just something that I need to ask Master Jefferson, that's all.

Sally: It must be important, to have you this anxious.

Madison: It's nothing.

Sally: Come now, why don't you tell me what it is? You're obviously worried about something. Used to tell me all your troubles when you were a boy.

Madison: This is. . . different. I can't talk to you about it.

Sally: You can. No matter what it is, Madison. You can.

Madison: *(To himself)* Can't talk to him, either, though. Don't know what I was thinking. Coming down here, thinking I'd ask him when he got home. Thinking he'd tell me. Stupid, stupid thing to do. Must be true. No son of his would do such a stupid--

Sally: What are you talking about?

Madison: You know what, Mama? I don't even know. Don't even know, myself.

Sally: Come, now. Tell me all about it.

Madison: Mama, I told you, it's nothing.

Sally: Madison--

Madison: *It's nothing.*

Sally: Madison Hemings, you sit down right now, and tell me what's going on.

Madison: Mama!

Sally: Sit. *(He sits)* Well?

Madison: I heard something.

Sally: All right. What did you hear?

Madison: Heard it this morning. All day, I haven't been able to get it out of my mind. Feels like I'm going to go crazy, Mama. It can't be true, but then, it would explain why he--he--

Sally: Tell me!

Sally: You're not making any sense. You need to start at the beginning.

Madison: She said . . . that it isn't true. That he should never believe a word of it, because

Madison: Well, we were up working on the banister this morning. And I heard Mrs. Randolph talking to her son--

Sally: Oh, Madison.

Sally: Jeffy. Yes?

Madison: That's what she said, Mama. And then she said--she said that it was Mr. Carr.

Madison: Seems he'd heard some rumors. Talk in the neighborhood. . . talk about you and, and. . . that we were, Mr. Carr's children. Not Master Jefferson's. All day, I haven't

been able to think about anything else. You've got to tell me the truth, Mama. I've got to

Sally: I see. *(Pause)* . . . Randolph telling the truth? Is Mr. Carr my father? Please, Mama, I've got to know.

Madison: And he was asking her about it. He wasn't upset, just curious. After all, he's a man now. Like me. He understands how things are. But Mrs. Randolph, she got very upset and started crying. . .

Sally: My son, Grown, and yet so much a child. And found myself to be a child, too.

Sally: Martha! Martha cried? Madison could not. I understood why she had said. . .

For had I not lived through the gossip, and the scandal? Had I not lived it at his side? His

Madison: Oh, yes. That's how we could hear it. She was crying, and her voice was high and so loud that we could hear. . . every word. We didn't mean to listen, Mama. But we could hear every word.

he truth. Again. And with each familiar word and story, he grew more calm. Just as he did when he was a baby--cick, and trembling. When only my voice,

Sally: It's all right, Madison. . . . My baby. Satisfied then, to have his father at a great distance. Satisfied, truly, with his fate. With just knowing he was Master

Madison: I tried not to listen, but I couldn't help it--

And when he finally said to that afternoon--his face in high color, looking almost

Sally: What did she say? He still knew what had taken place in his absence. The drama of a young man asking the identity. Asking it of his mother. Having

Madison: Now I wish I hadn't heard. . . . as he had so many other things. Missed my

loneliness. The emptiness and longing he left in his wake. That always fell to me, who

Sally: Tell me! He was sheltered from much as he grew, in his study. Sheltered from the

Madison: She said. . . she said. . . *(Almost hysterical)* Mama, I can't! I can't talk to you about--

Sally: Tell me!

Madison: She said. . . that it isn't true. That he should never believe a word of it, because it isn't true. And that anyone who says it is true, is a liar.

Sally: Oh, Madison.

Madison: That's what she said, Mama. And then she said--she said that it was Mr. Carr. That it wasn't Master Jefferson at all. That Mr. Carr had been. . . seeing you all these years. And that we were, Mr. Carr's children. Not Master Jefferson's. All day, I haven't been able to think about anything else. You've got to tell me the truth, Mama. I've got to know. Was Mrs. Randolph telling the truth? Is Mr. Carr my father? Please, Mama, I've got to know.

Entrance hall of Monticello, 1829.

Sally: My son. Grown, and yet so much a child. And found myself to be a child, too. Though I saw the need, where Madison could not. I understood why she had said. . . . For had I not lived through the gossip, and the scandal? Had I not lived it at his side? His invisible partner. Still, it felt as if her careful lies took too much from me. My memories. All that had ever been my life.

I told Madison the truth. Again. And with each familiar word and story, he grew more calm. Just as he did when he was a baby--sick, and trembling. When only my voice, my cool hand on his little forehead, could calm him. My baby. Satisfied then, to have his father at a great distance. Satisfied, finally, with little. With just knowing he was Master Tom's.

And when he finally rode in that afternoon--his face in high color, looking almost young again, as he always did after a ride--he little knew what had taken place in his absence. The drama of a young man asking his identity. Asking it of his mother. Having never known his father. He had missed it, as he had so many other things. Missed my loneliness. The emptiness and longing he left in his wake. That always fell to me, who followed him. He was sheltered from much on his horse, in his study. Sheltered from the

Jefferson: Can't sleep with shoes.

meaner emotions. The struggles. Never aware of the lesser creatures in his house. . . fighting, always fighting over him. And he, so calm. Above it all. Always above it.

There was a pillow, he once told me. That he was carried on when he was young. Carried on it by servants. . . slaves. . . . When his family moved to Tuckahoe. It was his first memory, he said. In those first nights when we faced each other in that moonlit bed in Paris. . . . He told me this memory. Of all his memories, he shared the first. As if he *knew*. . . . Master Tom, carried on a pillow. As Maria was carried up his mountain. . . before she died. I often pictured that, Master Tom's pale young face, somber. Above so many other faces--smiling, and dark. Laughing faces with so much more cause to be somber. Yet somehow, happy in service. To him. Even then, with him not yet a man. And that was how he lived. Seated high atop his pillow. And we, servants all of us, carrying him--our beloved but heavy burden.

Scene Eight

Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello, 1826. JEFFERSON has aged considerably--he appears weak, and leans heavily on SALLY for support. His characteristic sense of control, focus, and articulation are markedly absent in this scene--he appears to be heavily medicated. Although JEFFERSON is not lucid, SALLY seems to comprehend his thought patterns. She carefully leads JEFFERSON to his bed.

Sally: *(Seating him)* There, my love.

Jefferson: I don't want to--

Sally: You must.

Jefferson: I'm not tired. No need to--you worry too much. About me. Worrying all the time. Me.

Sally: Now, let me take those shoes.

(SALLY bends to remove his shoes. JEFFERSON stares forward absently, thrusting his foot out to her.)

Jefferson: Can't sleep with shoes.

Sally: That's right. Please!

Jefferson: Letters. (*Gestures to desk*) ? You want them open? Please.

Sally: No. You need to rest right now.

Jefferson: Can never rest. with them open.

Sally: Shhhh. *(She holds her hand)* Here. With me.

Jefferson: Can't rest. *(If I stay?) (He nods)* All right.

Sally: Don't be silly. Of course you can. *(let go of her hand, and now places it on his forehead. SALLY, understanding his meaning, strokes his forehead and hair again.)*

Jefferson: (*Rising*) No, Sally. Sally. My Sally.

Sally: There. Now close your eyes. You can't sleep like that, staring at me. I won't

Sally: (*Seating him*) No, you rest now.

Jefferson: Too much time to rest. James. James rests now. And Maria. My baby. And your babies. . .

Sally: Yes. I'm here. And I won't leave. You can sleep now. I'm right here.

Sally: Don't--

Jefferson: Sally. Sally Hornings. And the children.

Jefferson: So much wrong. Didn't know.

Sally: Try not to talk.

Sally: Shhhh.

Jefferson: The babies. Sally. Sally sketches babies. Cicero. Cicero, and Madison. . . and

Jefferson: Too long resting. Too short a--

Sally: Don't talk. Lie down and sleep, my love.

Jefferson: Forgiven me. For even. . . Forgiven me anything.

Sally: It was my fault as much as yours, you know that. (*She strokes his face*) You know that. Now, don't talk anymore. I'm going to pull the curtains, and let you rest. (*Crosses to window*) Broken.

Jefferson: Please! Please!

Sally: *(Crossing to the bed)* What is it? You want them open?

Jefferson: My trees. And birds. And--

Sally: But you can't sleep with them open.

Jefferson: *(Grabs her hand)* Here. With me.

Sally: Will you sleep if I stay? *(He nods)* All right.

(SALLY sits on bed. JEFFERSON has not let go of her hand, and now places it on his forehead. SALLY, understanding his meaning, strokes his forehead and hair again.)

Sally: There. Now close your eyes. You can't sleep like that, staring at me. I won't leave. Close them. Yes, that's better.

Jefferson: *(Sighing)* Sally. Sally.

Sally: Yes, I'm here. And I won't leave. You can sleep now. I'm right here.

Jefferson: Sally. Sally Hemings. And the children.

Sally: Try not to talk.

Jefferson: The babies. Sally. Sally sketches babies. Cicero. Cicero, and Madison. . . and Harriets. Two Harriets.

Sally: *(Overlapping)* Shhhh.

Jefferson: Gone. And Maria, gone.

Sally: Don't.

Jefferson: Threads. Broken.

Sally: Shhhh.

Jefferson: And Martha in Paris. Red curls in Paris. Flying. And Cicero. . . Cicero flew. Round me, and landed. Always landed.

Sally: Yes. I remember.

Jefferson: On me. In Paris. Always landed. Rested on me. Only me. Home to some. Yet needing. . . . Cicero. And Sally.

Curtain

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